

Biogr.

897^x

Pitt. Will.,



<36607664930010

<36607664930010

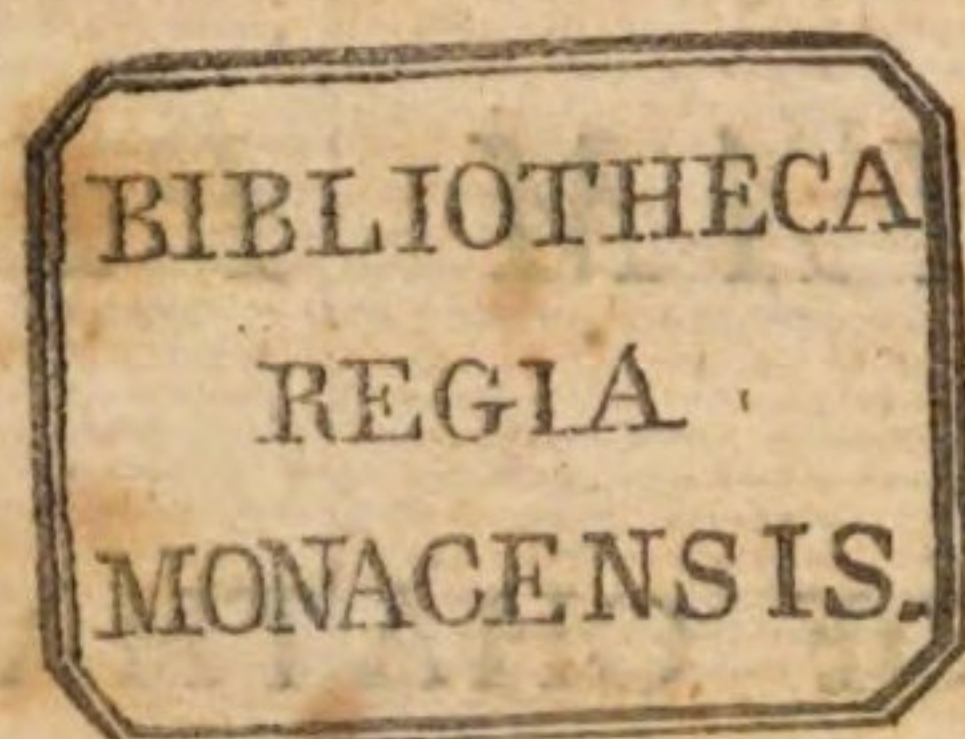
Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

QUANTO MAGIS ADMIRAREMINI, SI AUDISSETIS
IPSUM ! cicero.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY G.
KEARSLEY, AT NO. 46, IN FLEET-STREET.

1783.

406.21



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES, lord CAMDEN,

LORD PRESIDENT OF HIS
MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL :

AS, TO THE FRIEND OF LORD CHATHAM,
WHILE LIVING ;

THE PROTECTOR OF HIS MEMORY, NOW DEAD ;

AND THE MAN, IN WHOM HIS ILLUSTRIOUS
QUALITIES HAVE MOST EMINENTLY
SURVIVED :

THIS WORK,
AN INADEQUATE TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM AND
VENERATION,

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST DEVOTED

MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

London, Dec. 30, 1782. THE AUTHOR.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES LORD CAMPDEN

YOUR LORDSHIP'S MOST OBLIGED
AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT

AS, TO THE HONOUR OF HIS MEMORY, NOW DEAD,
WHILE LIVING,
THE FIDELITY OF HIS MEMORY, NOW DEAD,

AND THE WAY IN WHICH HIS INTERESTS
SHOULD BE MAINTAINED, NOW DEAD,

REVEREND

THEIR WORK

AN IMPROVED EDITION OF THE FIRST AND

REVISED

IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBLIGED

MOST OBLIGED SERVANT

LONDON, Printed, 1781. THE AUTHOR

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAP. I.

Extraction and early pursuits of Mr. Pitt.

—Takes his seat in parliament.—Administration of sir Robert Walpole.—

Spanish convention.—Administration of lord Carteret.

Page 1

CHAP. II.

Administration of Mr. Pelham.—Mr.

Pitt appointed paymaster general.—His versatility.—Origin of the war of

1755.—Death of Mr. Pelham.—Instability of his successors, the duke of

Newcastle and Mr. Fox.—Mr. Pitt

a 3

appointed

appointed secretary of state.—He is dismissed.

Page 37

CHAP. III.

Coalition of parties.—Mr. Pitt's administration.—Progress of the war.—Campaign of 1759.—Fruitless negotiations of peace.

Page 68

CHAP. IV.

Origin of the war with Spain — Death of king George the second.—Cabals of lord Bute.—Mr. Pitt resigns.—Critique of his administration.

Page 96

CHAP. V.

History of the great commoner.—Administration of lord Bute.—Campaign of 1762.—Peace of Paris.—Mr. Grenville's administration.—Administration of lord Rockingham.—Affair of general warrants.—Of the stamp-act.

Page 129

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

vii

CHAP. VI.

Mr. Pitt becomes lord privy seal, and earl of Chatham.—His coadjutors in administration.—Measures of government.—Lord Chatham withdraws from public business.—System of American taxation renewed.—Middlesex election.—Earls of Shelburne and Chatham resign.—Subsequent transactions.

Page 165

CHAP. VII.

Lord Chatham takes the lead of opposition.—Appointment of lord North.—Falkland's islands.—Imprisonment of the lord mayor.—Incroachments on the East-India company.—Riot at Boston.—Penal acts of parliament. Page 197

CHAP. VIII.

Meeting of the general congress.—Lord Chatham's conciliatory plan.—Coercive
a 4 *measures*

measures pursued.—Commencement of the war.—Declaration of independency. Campaign of 1776.—Expedition from Canada. Page 220

C H A P. IX.

Fourth session of the third parliament of George the third.—Address to the throne.—Enquiry into the state of the nation.—Transaction with lord Bute.—Lord North's conciliatory bills.—Treaty between France and America avowed.—Debate concerning the independency of America.—Death.—And character of lord Chatham. Page 248

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

MUCH has been said of historical impartiality ; and the generality seem to require it, as the first, and most indispensable quality of this branch of literature. It is however, like almost all terms of human invention, of ambiguous meaning. There is an impartiality, that embraces no party ; that relates, with the same spiritless and dispassionate tenour, the cruelties of a Nero, and the generous designs, and benevolent conduct of an *Henri le grand*. This is to be found, in the greatest perfection, in the dullest, and the stupidest historians. Lover, as

x INTRODUCTION.

as I am, of impartiality, I think it my duty, in this place, to advertise my reader, that this kind of impartiality, I abjure, and I despise. I am even free enough to think, that histories, thus gifted, do not deserve the opening, to a philosopher; to a reader of morality; or a reader of taste.

BUT there is an impartiality; how shall I describe her? She is the native of no country; but a citizen of the world. She knows no personal regards; and she is superior to all party connections. She is deaf to the mandates of a court; and dead to the momentary gust of popular opinion. With a piercing eye, she looks through every disguise; and, with a discriminating spirit, she separates, in the most dazzling and beautiful characters, the false brilliant, from the true. She
seats

INTRODUCTION. xi

seats herself in the chair of truth. She appears the great archetype, of the celebrated *Ægyptian* judge, who decided, with solemnity, upon the merits of the dead; and determined the porportion of lustre, that should be reflected, from their characters, upon the remotest posterity. She considers this, as her sacred and inviolable office: and never, never can any temptation move her, to lend her authority, to elevate vice, on the one hand; or, on the other, to give substance and energy, to the blast of envy.

BUT then she is the farthest in the world from coolness and indifference. On the contrary, she treats every event, that comes before her, with deliberate, but energetic decision. Vice shudders, at her tribunal; and cruelty

xii INTRODUCTION.

ty shrinks, into that abject, cowardly, trembling thing, that God and nature stamped her. Innocence, liberty, humanity enshrine themselves, beneath her standard. She is the only vicar of the divinity upon earth; and the visible head of that illustrious church, which alone, from all nations of the world, unalterable rectitude, and immortal benevolence shall honour, in a future state. In fine, she is the genuine professor of humanity. By imperceptible, never ceasing advances, she wins over the sons of men, to the restoration of paradise. She discovers, to them, all, that is virtue, and all, that is praise. And this is the consummation of her reign; to expand every beautiful affection of the human heart, wide, as the universe of God; to blunt the horrid instruments of savage war, into instruments

INTRODUCTION. xlii

ments of agriculture, and the arts of cultivation; and to render man to man, in every distant clime, the propitious genius, and the guardian angel.

AN attempt, at the former sort of impartiality, has spoiled half the well written histories, in the world. The bulk, it was impossible, should by this, or any other mistake, be spoiled. It is very lately, that the world has been taught; if indeed, in a comprehensive sense, it can yet be said, to be taught, the superiority, and the value of the genuine impartialty. The first writer, that has had the spirit, to assert it, in its fullest extent, seems to have been, the celebrated abbé Raynal. It is superfluous, to add, that this is the impartiality, to the attainment of which,

xiv INTRODUCTION.

which, the author of the following work, has not most ardently aspired.

ONE word more, it is yet necessary to subjoin. His subject, abstracted, from its eternal arduousness, has, in this respect, a great additional difficulty. It is, in the utmost degree, recent; and one half of the characters, of which it is composed, are still living. In this case, the author does something more, than “walk, upon ashes, under
“which the fire, is not extinguish-
“ed.” You may inveigh, against the projects of an Alexander, and extol the virtues of a Brutus, in the strongest terms, that language can furnish, without incurring the suspicion of partiality. But, could the author flatter himself, that he had been happy enough; to abstract so far, from the age, in which he lives; as to view
events,

INTRODUCTION. xv

events, with the same disinterestedness, that he might employ, in the former instance: yet sure it is, that he should find few readers, assiduous and philosophical enough, to weigh him, in an even balance. He must throw himself then, upon the candour of the public; and rest his appeal, if that does not favour too much of vanity, with the judgement of posterity.

ERRATA;

INTRODUCTION. xv

events with the same disinterestedness, that he might employ, in the former instance; yet sure it is, that he should find few readers, studious and philosophical enough, to weigh him, in an even balance. He must throw himself then, upon the candour of the public; and rest his appeal, if that does not favour too much of vanity, with the judgement of posterity.

ERRATA:

- P. 2. l. 6. for need be, read needed to be.
- P. 4. l. 6. for excluded, read secluded.
- P. 31. l. 17. for not embroiled, read most embroiled,
- P. 103. l. 16. for discriminated, read disseminated.
- P. 162. l. 5. for reviving, read reserving.
- P. 198. l. 5. for sunk him, read sunk him much.

ERRATA

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE LIFE
OF
WILLIAM PITT, &c.

CHAP. I.

Extraction and early pursuits of Mr. Pitt.

—Takes his seat in Parliament.—Administration of sir Robert Walpole.—Spanish convention.—Administration of lord Carteret.

MR. WILLIAM PITT, the subject of the present memoir, was born on the fifteenth of November, 1708. In conformity to the usual practice of biographers, it may be expected, that I should give some account of his extraction and
A family.

family. He has been treated by a celebrated nobleman, as emphatically a new man. The fact is, that, as we cannot deduce his ancestry from a long line of nobility, so neither was it such, as that any man need be ashamed of it. His grandfather was Thomas Pitt, esquire, sometime governor of Madras, and who sold to the king of France the celebrated diamond, commonly known by the appellation of *Pitt's diamond*. A younger son of that gentleman was created earl of Londonderry in Ireland; and one of his daughters married James Stanhope, esquire, afterwards earl Stanhope, the minister and friend of king George the first. Robert Pitt, of Boconnoc, in Cornwall, esquire, the father of our hero, was the eldest son. His lady was sister to John, earl of Grandison. By her he had two sons, of whom William was the younger, and five daughters.

It

EARL OF CHATHAM. 3

It is agreed on all hands, that Mr. Pitt's patrimony was narrow, and lord Chesterfield has fixed it at an annuity of one hundred pounds a year. As his grandfather was an East-India nabob, and, as it should seem, remarkably successful; his father the eldest son; and himself the younger of only two, the scantiness of this pittance is not easily to be accounted for.

His original destination was the army, and a cornetcy of horse was his first, and only commission in it. Thus he appears to have set out in life with as bounded a prospect, and as few natural expectancies, as can well be imagined. It is usual to rise in the state, by the influence of family connections, or the dint of an affluent fortune. It was reserved for Mr. Pitt, to make his way through every obstacle of this sort, and to owe his distinction, solely to an extraordinary eloquence, and acknowledged abilities. It was his

glory to reflect honour, not to derive it.

So early as the age of sixteen, he is said to have been the martyr of an hereditary gout. By this circumstance, he was necessarily excluded, whatever we may suppose his inclinations to have been, from the dissipated pleasures of society. It furnished him with the two great prerequisites to acquired talents; leisure and temperance.

IN this situation, we may picture to ourselves his great soul, brooding with indignance over the obscurity of his station, and grasping in imagination some theatre of splendor and astonishment, suited to his extensive abilities. While he revolved the pages of a Cicero, and the eulogies of Thucydides, he felt a secret monition, that the senate, and not the camp, the cabinet, and not the field, were the scenes for which nature had destined him.

IMPRESSED

EARL OF CHATHAM. 5

IMPRESSED with these sentiments, he obtained a seat in the eighth parliament of Great Britain, summoned to meet on the fourteenth of January, 1735. His family, I believe, had generally adhered to the old tory system, and he immediately joined the opposition to sir Robert Walpole, associating, however, indiscriminately with both the parties, of which it was composed. They know little of the history of Great Britain, and the many changes the parties among us have undergone, who conceive the name of toryism to be in all cases a reproach. The tories have often proved the truest friends of liberty, and the whigs in their turn have patronized the very worst system of despotism, of which human society is capable. In a word, such is the frailty of our nature, that the men who are possessed of command, are very rarely disposed, to extend the power of control, or to raise barriers against the

A 3 abuses,

abuses, of which themselves may be guilty.

SIR Robert Walpole had now been at the head of administration sixteen years, and, for the last half of that term, his power had been in a manner uncontrollable. There is an instinctive propensity in mankind, to think reverently of the mysteries of government; and a person, who is able, in whatever manner, to preside over the affairs of a nation for a considerable period, is infallibly exalted into a great man. In pursuance of this propensity, we have heard much of the abilities of sir Robert Walpole. He had a great fluency and readiness of language; and, though what he uttered was neither nervous nor elegant, yet it had its weight with those, who estimate the value of a speech by its length, and think him the best orator, who can harangue upon all occasions without hesitation. Beside which, Walpole possessed a certain easiness of soul,
and

and callousness of sensation, which made him proof against all attacks, and raised him superior to every embarrassment. By an unwearied attention to figures and calculation, he had acquired an indifferent knowledge of the subject of finance, which his system of government did not always allow him to turn to the greatest advantage. That system was founded in the narrowest and most detestable principles. As he had never known what it was to be concerned in a popular administration, he was acquainted with no means of preserving his power, but that of corruption. The maxim, which he uniformly pursued, and shamelessly avowed, was, that every man had his price. He ridiculed the very ideas of patriotism and public spirit, thought self-interest the wisest principle by which a man could be actuated, and bribery the most elevated and comprehensive system, that ever entered into the human mind.

THE great misfortune attending this system, is, that its progress is silent and unalarming. The hasty strides of honest despotism, are sufficiently visible in themselves, and are strongly marked with the indignation of all the virtuous and erect spirits of society. But the kingdom of corruption cometh not with observation. It secretly undermines all that is most valuable in a constitution, and is not calculated to awaken that sudden and unbounded indignation it deserves. Accordingly we find that, for a time, things went on smoothly enough. And the first remarkable concussion, that the government of Walpole occasioned in the minds of the governed, was owing to a scheme he had formed for extending the laws of excise, by which, under specious pretences, he hoped to swell the number of his dependents, and add to the means of corruption. But what filled up the measure of his unpopularity, was his inglorious system with relation to foreign affairs. As he was the minister of the king, and not the man of the
the

EARL OF CHATHAM. 9

the people, he had long sacrificed the interests, and lavished the treasures of Great Britain, in subserviency to a system of continental measures, to which his master was invincibly attached. And at last, when the honour of this country was insulted, and its trade plundered, he shewed the most obstinate determination in favour of measures of peace and negotiation. As all his views were narrow, it is not to be wondered at, that, while he exerted himself to convince the people at home of his pacific resolutions, he did not consider, that he was encouraging the enemy to proceed to the very verge of hostile inflexibility, through the persuasion of assured impunity at last.

It was natural to expect, that the continuance of such a system should unite almost every comprehensive mind, and every generous spirit in parliament, in opposition to his measures. A minority, so respectable for abilities, and so splendid in eloquence,

eloquence, perhaps this country never saw. At the head of it we may place that superior genius, lord Bolingbroke. In parliament, they had the earl of Chesterfield, the lords Carteret and Bathurst, sir William Wyndham, and Mr. Pulteney. As the interests of this country, with respect to foreign nations, were uniformly mistaken and counteracted, they had nothing to do, but to point out the path of rectitude, and vindicate the beauty of truth. As the system of Walpole was one hideous mass of depravity and corruption, it was their business to plead the cause of manliness and independence, and to bring forward propositions, that bore the stamp of purity and renovation. A bill for repealing septennial parliaments, for excluding pensioners, and limiting the number of persons, holding offices under government, that might obtain a seat in the house of commons; these were a few of the many salutary measures they promoted. Employed in this task, the vir-
tuous

EARL OF CHATHAM. 11

tuous and unsuspecting gave them credit for the principles, by which they were actuated. Of whatever inconsistencies some of them might have been guilty, they were willingly forgotten, in consideration of their present merits and services.

It was at the period, in which this opposition was consolidated, a period, in the highest degree favourable for public exhibition, that Mr. Pitt entered the house of commons.

THE first essay of his eloquence appears to have been made upon a motion, that took place in the second session of this parliament, to congratulate his majesty upon the marriage of the prince of Wales. It is unmixed with any strain, but that of panegyric; and, though it is stamped with the modest and chastised manner of youth; yet we may trace in it, the first dawnings of that full and commanding style,

stile, which afterwards formed his distinguishing characteristic.

IN the following year, Mr. Pulteney brought forward a proposition, that may be considered, in some measure, as a sequel to the former, for making the same settlement, of one hundred thousand pounds, per annum, upon his royal highness, which his majesty had enjoyed, while prince of Wales. This was considered by some, as an officious intermeddling in the king's family affairs, and an artful attempt for obtaining the countenance of the prince for the measures of opposition. To others it appeared a just and a reasonable measure, a proper tribute to the virtues of his highness, and an indispensable requisite to the independency of the heir-apparent to the crown. Certain it is, that it had the concurrence of the prince, who thought he could not in honour desert those, who had so generously undertaken to serve him ; and who
firmly

firmly rejected any terms of accommodation, but such, as should be made by parliament. Mr. Pitt exerted himself in support of this measure, and in the same month, but whether previously, or subsequent to the debate, from the records before me, I am not able to determine, the prince complimented him with the appointment of one of the grooms of his bed-chamber. The same session was distinguished by the passing the play-house bill, and the rejection of a scheme, proposed by that steady and disinterested patriot, sir John Barnard, for reducing the interest, and afterwards redeeming the capital of the national debt.

IN the following year, the Spanish depredations engrossed a principal share in the public attention. The complaint against them had been of long standing; but, for reasons of policy, they had been intermitted during the war of 1734, in which the Spaniards repossessed themselves

selves of the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. Upon the restoration of peace, they were once more renewed, with additional circumstances of irritation and barbarity. Petitions were presented to parliament by merchants from different parts of the kingdom, and the nation was generally inflamed by a series of events, which they conceived so ruinous to the trade, and disgraceful to the character of Britain.

As it usually happens in matters of this nature, both parties had ground for complaint. A trading nation, such as the English, will seldom be overscrupulous about the means of enriching herself; and the long neglect of military glory, with some other incidental circumstances, had rendered, at this time, the desire of accumulation, her ruling passion. Scarcely any kind of illicit commerce, however barefaced, was omitted; and the Spaniard, keenly jealous

lous of the trade of his American colonies, revenged the intrusion with the utmost severity, and without any accurate distinction of parties. A matter, like this, had it been taken up in time, and treated with firmness, might have been compromised without difficulty. But the minister paid it very little attention, and, by his coldness, procrastination and timidity, suffered the evil to continue, and the wound to gangrene till it threatened the most serious consequences.

THE national irritation, and the vigorous attacks of his opponents in parliament, at length roused him from his supineness. It seemed absolutely necessary that something should be done. He knew that a war would expose his administration to the most imminent peril. The treasures, that were now employed in the business of corruption, must be diverted, and new and unpopular taxes imposed.

imposed. And it is probable, that he felt his inability to conduct a war with spirit and effect. He therefore determined to make any concessions to avoid one. The more cold and timorous he appeared, the more the Spaniard rose in his pretensions. At length, from this strange combination of pusillanimity on the one hand, and insolence on the other, the celebrated convention was produced.

NEVER were these kingdoms more completely degraded in the eye of the world, than by this transaction. If it be allowed, that a minority in parliament have sometimes sacrificed rectitude of judgment to uniformity of opposition; if it be laudable to embrace every opportunity of weakening an administration, whose government we conceive to be prejudicial to our country: what vigour, and what animation may we not expect from opposition in the present instance? an opposition that had
long

long been ripening, and increased every day : an opposition unrivalled in brilliancy, and now personally headed by the heir apparent to the crown.

THE termination of differences was notified from the throne, and sir Robert Walpole was unbounded in his encomiums of the treaty he had obtained. “Future
“ ages would look back to its conclusion,
“ as to the most glorious period of our history ; and unprejudiced posterity would
“ do justice to the councils that had produced the happy event !” Upon the day, appointed for taking it into consideration, four hundred members were computed to have taken their seats by eight in the morning. Two days were employed in hearing petitions, and reading papers. At length the discussion was entered upon with the utmost ardour. It was insisted, that by the convention, we had neither obtained satisfaction, in the censure of those, by whom the outrages

B

were

were committed ; security, by an explicit admission of our undoubted right ; nor reparation, in the payment of our just demands : Nay, that we were, in all respects, in a worse situation, than before the convention was made ; since we had assured impunity to those, that had injured us ; referred our undoubted right to a precarious discussion ; and granted the Spaniard a general release, in consideration of the payment of a sum, for which that court had previously engaged herself upon account of five ships recently captured. Mr. Pitt, with a strength and energy of diction, peculiarly his own, declaimed against the convention, as no better than a stipulation for national ignominy. “ The complaints,” he exclaimed, “ of your despairing merchants, the voice of England has condemned it. Be the guilt of it upon the head of its adviser !” The question was carried against him, and the treaty received a parliamentary sanction. It was
upon

upon this occasion, that the famous secession was made by almost the whole body of the opposition.

It has been questioned, how far such a step is to be considered, as justifiable. Undoubtedly it ought never to be taken, but in the last resort. Where it can be made with unanimity and effect, as appears to have been the case in this instance, it is clearly, of all kinds of opposition, the most formidable and alarming. The seceders were revered by the nation in general, as the martyrs of the liberty of the people.—In the house of lords, fifty-four peers voted against the convention, and a spirited protest was entered by thirty-nine of that number, including all the noblemen of the kingdom, most eminent for their abilities, integrity and virtue.

It does not appear, that Spain ever seriously intended to fulfil the terms of the

convention, and before the rising of parliament it came out, that she had failed to make the stipulated payment. War was now become inevitable. After a few vain attempts to compel the enemy into terms of accommodation, it was proclaimed on the nineteenth of October. In the ensuing session of parliament, the seceding members resumed their seats in the house.

SIR Robert Walpole presently found, what he had previously suspected, that he was in no degree equal to the conduct of a war. The grievous taxes, with which the nation was burdened; the languid manner, in which hostilities were conducted; and the reiterated complaints of the commander in America, involved him in the highest degree of unpopularity. A wider theatre of contention too began at this time to be opened, by the disputes about the succession of the Austrian dominions. In a word, the season became
ripe

ripe for the most unqualified attacks, and on the thirteenth of February, 1741, it was moved, to address his majesty, to remove him from his presence and councils for ever.

THOUGH this motion was supported with the greatest abilities, and the most striking deduction of particulars, yet it was rejected by an unusual majority. The tory division of the country party was by some means prevailed upon to discountenance it, and quitted the house in a body, to the number of sixty persons, previous to the division.

A BILL had been brought in, in the foregoing session, to establish a register of seamen, for the more effectual manning of the navy; and, having miscarried at that time, it was now revived with some modifications. I do not mention this, so much for its intrinsic importance, as upon account of the very extraordinary

circumstance it occasioned. Mr. Pitt was one of its opponents. He had also strenuously supported the motion against sir Robert Walpole, and, by so doing, he may be supposed to have irritated the minister and his friends. Mr. Horace Walpole, a speaker without eloquence, and a minister without dignity, unpolished in his manners, and vulgar in his diction, embraced this occasion of returning the compliment by a personal attack. He reproached Mr. Pitt with his youth; and observed to him, that the purposes of that assembly were very little promoted by the clamour of rage, and the petulance of invective; nor was the discovery of truth advanced by pompous diction, and theatrical emotion.

MR. PITT'S answer was as follows.
“ Sir, the atrocious crime of being a
“ young man, which the honourable
“ gentleman has, with such spirit and
“ decency, charged upon me, I shall
“ neither

“ neither attempt to palliate nor deny;
 “ but content myself with wishing, that
 “ I may be one of those, whose follies
 “ may cease with their youth; and not
 “ of that number, who are ignorant in
 “ spite of experience.

“ WHETHER youth can be imputed to
 “ any man, as a reproach, I will not,
 “ sir, assume the province of determin-
 “ ing; but surely, age may become just-
 “ ly contemptible, if the opportunities,
 “ which it brings, have passed away
 “ without improvement; and vice ap-
 “ pears to prevail, when the passions
 “ have subsided. The wretch, that,
 “ after having seen the consequences of
 “ a thousand errors, continues still to
 “ blunder, and whose age has only ad-
 “ ded obstinacy to stupidity, is surely
 “ the object of either abhorrence or con-
 “ tempt, and deserves not, that his grey
 “ head should secure him from insults.
 “ Much more, sir, is he to be abhorred,

“ who, as he has advanced in age, has
“ receded from virtue, and becomes
“ more wicked, with less temptation;
“ who prostitutes himself for money,
“ which he cannot enjoy, and spends the
“ remains of his life in the ruin of his
“ country,

“ BUT youth, sir, is not my only crime;
“ I have been accused of acting a
“ theatrical part.—A theatrical part
“ may either imply some peculiarities
“ of gesture, or a dissimulation of my
“ real sentiments, and an adoption of
“ the opinions and language of another
“ man. In the first sense, sir, the
“ charge is too trifling to be confuted,
“ and deserves only to be mentioned,
“ that it may be despised. I am at li-
“ berty, like every other man, to use
“ my own language; and, though I
“ may perhaps have some ambition to
“ please this gentleman, I shall not lay
“ myself under any restraint, nor very
“ solicitously

“ solicitously copy his diction, or his
 “ mein, however matured by age, or
 “ modelled by experience.

“ If any man shall, by charging me
 “ with theatrical behaviour, imply, that
 “ I utter any sentiments, but my own,
 “ I shall treat him, as a calumniator,
 “ and a villian; nor shall any protection
 “ shelter him from the treatment he
 “ deserves. I shall, upon such an occa-
 “ sion, without scruple, trample upon
 “ all those forms, with which wealth
 “ and dignity entrench themselves, nor
 “ shall any thing, but age, restrain my
 “ resentment; age, which always brings
 “ one privilege, that of being insolent
 “ and supercilious without punishment.

“ But, with regard, sir, to those,
 “ whom I have offended, I am of opi-
 “ nion, that, if I had acted a borrowed
 “ part, I should have avoided their cen-
 “ sure. The heat, that offended them,
 “ is

“ is the ardour of conviction, and that
“ zeal for the service of my country,
“ which neither hope, nor fear shall in-
“ fluence me to suppress. I will not
“ sit unconcerned, while my liberty is
“ invaded, nor look in silence upon pub-
“ lic robbery. I will exert my endea-
“ vours at whatever hazard, to repel
“ the aggressor, and drag the thief to
“ justice, whoever may protect them in
“ their villiany, and whoever may par-
“ take of their plunder.”

THE term limited for the duration of parliament was now expired, and Mr. Pitt was rechosen at the general election. This was perhaps one of the most violent struggles between national discontent and ministerial influence, that was ever exhibited. A majority, however, was returned in the popular interest; and, after a few trying divisions, sir Robert resigned his promotions, and quitted the house of commons for ever.

IN

IN the mean time, he was too wise to do this, without taking some previous measures. Though the maxim of his administration had been, that every man had his price, he had not hitherto been entirely successful in reducing it to practice. I know not that we ever find him, bringing over a considerable leader in opposition to the court party. But upon this occasion, he seems to have employed a degree of policy and address, to which he had before been a stranger.

His first application was to the prince of Wales. He offered to double his income, to discharge all his debts, and to provide for his followers. The prince, with a laudable fortitude, rejected a proposal, that must have damned his reputation for ever, and declared, that he would listen to no terms, so long as Walpole remained at the head of affairs. He then applied to the whig leaders. He offered them carte blanche; assured them,

them, that, in the management of affairs, their own system should be adopted; and required nothing of them in return, but impunity for himself and his friends.

THOUGH this were the moment to have restored the constitution to its vigour, though all their hard-fought battles were now brought to a termination, and immortality seemed suspended over their heads; yet the baits, held out to them, were, it seems, too tempting to be refused. Sir William Wyndham was now dead, and Lord Bolingbroke removed to the continent. Lord Carteret and Mr. Pulteney were the first, that closed with the minister's proposals: others presently followed; and a new administration was adjusted, of the old colleagues of sir Robert Walpole, and the present deserters of the cause of the people.

It seemed, as if the name of patriotism was changed into contempt, and human
nature

nature degraded from the elevation of virtue, by such an event. The tide of popular indignation was turned. Mr. Pulteney was its first victim. His society, so lately courted, was shunned, as a contagion ; and, instead of the acclamations that ere-while attended his progress, he was every where encountered with hisses and scorn. Upon others, indeed, the effect was not so sudden. But, as it has been said of the murderers of Cæsar, that they were all, sooner or later, overtaken by the vengeance of heaven : so, of all those, by whom Walpole was screened from justice, there was not one, who was able long to retain the power he had acquired by treachery, or who could ever recover any share in the public confidence.

Mr. Pulteney, in pursuance of a promise he had made while in opposition, would accept of no office in the government ; and, of consequence, presently
found,

found, that he retained no influence in the state. His coadjutor, lord Carteret, engrossed the whole power of administration. As his fortune was narrow, his principles pliant, and his ambition unbounded, he studiously fell in with all the prejudices of his master, and engaged in the continental measures he so lately condemned, with a vigour and decision, which sir Robert Walpole never dared, or was never able to assume.

It was at this moment, that Mr. Pitt rose upon the ruins of his confederates. He continued firm to his old principles, and the nation in general began to look up to him, as almost the only man they could trust. He urged the enquiry against Walpole with unfeigned earnestness; he warned the nation against being deceived by the semblance of a change; and he opposed with a constancy, which nothing could subdue, those expensive and ruinous measures, in which the government
was

was so deeply engaged. It has been a popular objection to his eloquence, that it was rather declamatory, than solid; and that he shone more in pointed invective, and a warm appeal to the passions, than in the methodical deductions of reason, or the lucid arrangement of particulars. Whether this were in any case true, I will not now enquire; I believe, there is not a speech, in all the records of the British senate, more fraught with sound knowledge, and the deepest political reflections, than that which Mr. Pitt made, against the address, upon the speech from the throne, in December, 1743. Though it was delivered at a time, when the public affairs were not embroiled, and the public passions wrought up to the greatest height; yet is it such, that the wisdom of ages, and the impartiality of latest posterity, can scarcely make any addition, to the vigour of its reasonings, and the sagacity of its determinations. So true it is, that Mr. Pitt's eloquence was
of

of every kind ; and that he never undertook a subject, in which you would not have thought, that he was formed for that, and that alone.

IN this speech, he readily admits, that the balance of power ought to be one object of our politics ; and he draws the line, beyond which it will ever be unwise in us to pass. He observes, that, as we are the most remote from danger, we ought always to be the least susceptible of jealousy, and the last to take the alarm : That, when the powers of the continent apply to us, to assist them against the encroachments of an ambitious neighbour, we may take what share, and what sort of share in the war we think fit ; but, when we apply to them, they will prescribe to us in both. He points out the application of this principle to the late, and the then state of affairs ; shows what were the deviations of the former administration, and what the new
deviations

deviations of the present ; and draws a
 lively contrast between the persons, who
 had the chief direction in both. “ Our for-
 “ mer minister,” says he, “ betrayed
 “ the interests of his country, by his
 “ pusillanimity ; our present sacrifices
 “ them by his quixotism. Our former
 “ minister was for negociating with all
 “ the world ; our present is for fighting
 “ against all the world. Our former mini-
 “ ster was for agreeing to every treaty,
 “ though never so dishonourable ; our
 “ present will give ear to no treaty,
 “ though never so reasonable. Thus
 “ both appear to be extravagant ; but
 “ with this difference, that, by the ex-
 “ travagance of the present, the nation
 “ will be put to a much greater charge
 “ than ever it was by the extravagance
 “ of the former.”

Lord Carteret's administration now
 drew to a period. Though his govern-
 ment was unpopular, and all his measures

C

were

were questioned ; yet his open and parliamentary enemies were not the most dangerous he had to encounter. The branches of administration were by this time regularly distributed. Lord Carteret, by the superiority of his abilities, and his ascendancy over his master, had obtained the sole direction of foreign affairs ; while the power of the supplies was in Mr. Pelham and the duke of Newcastle, the remaining associates of sir Robert Walpole. Conscious that the business of government could not go on without them, and tormented with the jealousy, inseparable from little minds, they resolved to drive their colleague from the councils of his sovereign. At first, indeed, they prosecuted their design in a more covert manner ; and, by a most unparalleled step, appear, by their influence with the regency at home, to have frustrated the progress lord Carteret had made, under the inspection of his master, upon the continent, for obtaining

ing an immediate treaty of peace, upon terms, equally advantageous and honourable. But, as they found, that, in doing this, they could neither compel that nobleman to resign, nor shake his credit in the closet; they threw off the mask, explicitly declared they would serve with him no longer, and compelled their master to acquiesce in their determination.

It is mortifying, to see the abilities of a Pitt, however undesignedly, cooperating in so ungenerous a plan. Lord Carteret, it is true, by his desertion of the sentiments he maintained in opposition, showed, that ambition was, in his breast, a principle, sovereign and uncontrolled. Yet it is difficult, to see him made the victim of so contemptible an intrigue, without feeling some motions of sympathy and indignation. He was possessed of the finest abilities, the most elegant taste, the most splendid eloquence. All the treasures of polite literature were

his own ; and he perfectly understood the interests and the politics of every court in Europe. In a word, had his integrity kept pace with his talents, he was formed to be the brightest ornament of the court, in which he lived. His patronage might have given new vigour to the literature, and his political skill new lustre to the annals of Britain.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

Administration of Mr. Pelham.—Mr. Pitt appointed paymaster-general.—His versatility.—Origin of the war of 1755.—Death of Mr. Pelham.—Instability of his successors, the duke of Newcastle, and Mr. Fox.—Mr. Pitt appointed secretary of state.—He is dismissed.

MR. PELHAM, who succeeded, was one of the élèves of sir Robert Walpole. He inherited his skill in parliamentary management, and was competently versed in the business of finance. But his abilities were in no degree equal to the conduct of a war. In some respects, however, he was directly the reverse of his master. The manners of Walpole were blunt and undisguised; and, as he was a stranger to the senti-

ments, so he was not studious to employ the language of virtue, but where it was indispensibly necessary. The manners of Mr. Pelham were mild, plausible and insinuating. Upon all occasions, he preserved the decency of a gentleman, and the respectableness of office. By much apparent candour, and ever knowing, when to yield, he turned the edge of opposition. Though engaged in the prosecution of those ruinous measures of government, which were, in some measure entailed upon him; he has usually been considered, as a man of integrity and honour: and, however mistaken in his maxims of administration, is supposed to have been actuated by a sincere love for his country.

HITHERTO, amidst all the vicissitudes of the state, we have seen Mr. Pitt preserve a consistency of conduct, as laudable, as it is rare. It was this quality, which, united with his extraordinary talents, obtained

tained him at once the admiration and esteem of all the disinterested part of the nation. And, though, by such a conduct, he excluded himself from those lucrative appointments under government, to which his great abilities must necessarily have introduced him; yet, had his passion been gain, which it certainly was not, he did not remain wholly without his reward. A little previous to the time of which I am speaking, died the very celebrated Sarah, dutchess of Marlborough, possessed of immense riches; and who, though her fortune had been chiefly acquired by her power with the whigs; was violently attached to the country party, and even supposed secretly to favour the exiled family. Among other legacies, she bequeathed Mr. Pitt ten thousand pounds, “upon account,” as her will expresses it, “of his merit, “in the noble defence he has made, for “the support of the laws of England, “and to prevent the ruin of his country.”

HIS opposition to the measures of government was however now at an end. Lord Carteret retired in the close of the year 1744 ; and, though Mr. Pitt did not immediately come into office, yet, in the latter end of the same session of parliament, he resigned his appointment in the prince of Wales's household ; which may reasonably be considered, as a previous step to the arrangement, that shortly took place in his favour. In the following February, he was appointed joint vice-treasurer of Ireland, and, two months after, upon the death of Mr. Winnington, he exchanged that office for the place of paymaster-general of his majesty's forces.

DURING this whole period, from the resignation of lord Carteret, he appears to have preserved a total silence in parliament, respecting national questions, with a single exception. This was at the time, that they were called together, upon the breaking out of the rebellion in Scotland.

Scotland. He then stood up, in opposition to an amendment to the address to the throne, stating their determination, speedily to frame bills, for the further security of the freedom of representation, and the independency of parliament. In what manner he voted during this time, I am not able to determine. If it be allowable to hazard a conjecture, I should suppose he observed the same moderation in this respect, as he did in speaking: sometimes voted with administration; and sometimes, upon points, where his judgment was fixed, or his opinions well known, joined the minority. Be this, as it will; certain it is, he did not enter himself, as a speaker in favour of administration, till in the session, subsequent to the treaty of Aix la Chapelle.

HERE then it is, that we are presented with the first instance of that unsteadiness and versatility of conduct, which forms the favourite accusation of the enemies of
of

of this illustrious character. It is not however wholly without its excuse. Mr. Pelham affected to set out with forming an administration upon the broadest and most liberal plan. And, though he scarcely indulged the people, with even the appearance of a change of measures; he was able to bring the principal persons in minority, in both houses of parliament, to acquiesce in his arrangement. This was partly owing to the assurances he gave, that he did not expect those, who joined him, to abjure the principles they had previously embraced; and was even contented, they should publicly oppose his measures, whenever they apprehended them to be of pernicious tendency.

In the acquiescence I have mentioned, Mr. Pitt had certainly little or no share. But, deserted of his colleagues in opposition, and obliged, either to follow them, or to stand almost alone, he demurred. To continue to oppose, appeared a heartless

less and a fruitless labour. He foresaw no advantage, that could result from it to the public weal; and he felt, that it would amount, in a manner, to the shutting a perpetual door, upon his admission into any of the great offices of state. Ambition was doubtless a leading trait of his disposition. And, in this consisted the virtue of his character; that his ambition was directed, not to crooked ends, but to the largest and most excellent purposes; and that he had rather have seen it for ever ungratified, than gratified, in a manner, that, he believed, would not enable him to promote the service of his country. Accordingly he introduced, by his integrity, a considerable reform into the pay-office, which of all others is the most liable to abuse; and distinguished himself by the very honourable singularity, of never making any advantage of the public money, while it remained in his hands.

BUT,

BUT, though we have stated the reasons, which may be supposed to have influenced his conduct, we do not mean to adopt them. The first principle, whether of public, or private virtue, is to do that, which we apprehend to be right, without regard to consequences. He, who is the delegated guardian of the welfare, and the liberties of the people, is bound, upon all occasions, to exert the talents he possesses, in support of every salutary, and opposition to every pernicious measure. And the moment he deserts this line of conduct, he must be considered, in some measure, as betraying the trust, that is committed to him; and sacrificing to personal considerations the interests of his country.

THE period, of which I am now speaking, from the resignation of lord Carteret, to the peace of Aix la Chapelle, is, upon many accounts, a memorable era. The war was now become at once ruinous

ous and absurd. If, in the beginning, its conduct were such, as intitled its director to the appellation of a Quixote; in it's present state, it concentrated the extreme of madness, with the extreme of imbecility. It had, for some time, become totally destitute of an object, and was carried on for this single reason, because it was already begun. The victor, at the close of every campaign, held forth in vain to the vanquished, the most advantageous terms of accommodation. It is probable, that the administration, who, by their cabals, had prevented lord Carteret from accomplishing that desirable object, dared not immediately to do that themselves, which they had professed to disapprove in another. In the mean time, this very period was distinguished by the most perfect supineness at home. The opposition in parliament, equally reduced in numbers, and in spirit, was such, as scarcely to deserve the name.

At

At length however, at the time, in which ministers had chosen to accept the terms, that were held out to them, an accidental circumstance tended to revive, in some degree, the ardour of parliamentary debate. A fresh dispute had broken out between his majesty, and the prince of Wales. Lord Bolingbroke had, some time before, returned to his native country, and is now said to have secretly actuated the deliberations of the prince's court. The principal persons of that court, with the earl of Egmont at their head, fell down the stream of opposition. At the same time, Mr. Pitt, who, it is probable, had hitherto been restrained by his disapprobation of the conduct of the war, thought himself at liberty openly to support the measures of government. The minister had also a most able auxiliary in Mr. William Murray, now earl of Mansfield.

A GENEROUS mind can derive little pleasure, from detecting the inconsistencies,

cies, into which the greatest characters have fallen. But, though not an agreeable task, our regard for the truth of history renders it an indispensable one. Formerly Mr. Pitt had promoted, upon all occasions, the spirit of parliamentary enquiry; and stood forth the advocate of the most spirited measures in all our foreign concerns. Now he placed himself in the way of such discussions; and expatiated with fluency upon the advantages of temporising. Formerly he had pleaded with vehemence and energy, for the substituting a general address of thanks, instead of those prostitute echoes of the speech from the throne, so unworthy the majesty of a free people. Now he carefully displayed the evil tendency of a dry and unanimated style; and assured parliament, that these things were mere words of course, and might afterwards be retracted upon better information, without any breach, either of dignity, or truth. Formerly he had distinguished

distinguished himself by his opposition to a standing army; and, in pursuance of this principle, had espoused every restriction, that had been proposed, upon the despotism of military law. Now he pleaded for an extension of that law; and opposed a bill, whose object was to have created such a rotation in the army, that, in a few years, every peasant and artisan, in the kingdom, would have understood the business of a soldier, and the people in general have probably concluded, that a standing army was altogether useless. “Our liberties existed,” he declared, “solely in dependence upon the direction of the sovereign, and the virtue of the army. To that virtue,” said he, “we trust, even at this hour, small as our army is. To that virtue we must continue to trust, should we espouse all the precautions our warmest opposers can desire. And, without this virtue, should the lords, the commons, and the people of England,

“land,

“ land, intrench themselves behind parch-
 “ ment, up to the teeth ; the sword will
 “ find a passage to the vitals of the con-
 “ stitution.” In fine, he had formerly
 been uniform in his opposition to conti-
 nental measures, and the subsidising the
 princes of Germany. Now he stood up
 in defence of the most exceptionable spe-
 cies of subsidy ; a subsidy, in time of
 peace ; a subsidy, that has scarcely been
 found, in a single instance, to answer the
 end, for which it was designed, or to
 bind those to us in the season of danger,
 whom we thus anticipated in the time of
 tranquility,

THE generality, I believe, will be in-
 clined to question the sincerity of this
 conversion, and will represent to them-
 selves Mr. Pitt, as engaged in the sup-
 port of measures, which, in his own
 breast, he peremptorily disapproved.
 But they know little of the human heart,
 who suppose, that, in such cases, the
 D judgment

judgment evidently points one way, and interest and inclination another. Perhaps there does not exist, upon the face of the earth, an hypocrisy, unmixed and pure. In order to deceive others, we first deceive ourselves. Interest and ambition not only alter our language, but our minds. They attract our choice, they warp our understanding, and they cloud our discernment. It must also be remembered, that change of mind is scarcely ever the result of sudden conviction, but almost universally produced by a slow and imperceptible progress. In the complication of motives then, by which our conduct is governed, it is seldom possible, to ascribe its proportion to the influence of each ; and, though it were easy, we should hardly be much inclined to so unpleasant a task. Mr. Pitt was probably partly induced, to this second recession, from his original line of conduct, by the motives we stated in the former case. His conversion may be partly ascribed,

ed, to the power, exhibited in a thousand instances, of the fascinating manners of Mr. Pelham. And, I believe, the rebellion had, in some degree, the same influence upon his comprehensive soul, that it certainly had upon every weaker mind, to increase his loyalty, and improve his complaisance.

IN the mean time, I have met with but one instance, in which he exhibited the remains of his old principles; and made use of that liberty, which Mr. Pelham indulged to all the servants of the crown. He had ever pleaded for the reduction of our army, and the increase of our naval force. And in the session of 1751, an amendment being moved, to substitute 10,000 instead of 8,000 seamen, for the service of the ensuing year, he stood up, and strenuously supported it.

ONE salutary measure particularly distinguished the present administration. Al-

most immediately upon the renewal of peace, Mr. Pelham revived a part of the scheme of sir John Barnard, for the reduction of the national debt; and, in the face of a thousand obstacles, carried it into execution, with a firmness and a patriotism, that must always be mentioned to his honour.

THE last years of this minister, owing to the death of the prince of Wales, became once more undisturbed by opposition. Of consequence, Mr. Pitt remitted his exertions in support of administration, and fell back into that state of neutrality, which he had observed, previous to the conclusion of the peace of 1748. The only thing, by which he distinguished himself, during this period, was the bringing in a bill, for the relief of the pensioners of Chelsea hospital, and for abolishing the exorbitant usury, by which they were oppressed. He provided, that half a year's pension should always

ways be paid in advance, and that the annuity itself should be incapable of being mortgaged. This regulation will ever remain a monument, of the distinguished humanity of its author.

BUT events now began to prepare the way, for Mr. Pitt's accession to that high employment, in which he acquitted himself with so much personal honour, and so much to the glory and advantage of his country. America had now, by insensible degrees, grown up to the highest importance. At the peace of Utrecht, when we gave the law to the first sovereign in Europe, the boundaries of its most northern provinces were esteemed, at once, so uncertain, and so trifling in their consequence; that their final settlement was referred to conferences, that were little attended to, and an arbitration, that was never concluded. At this time, the spirit of commerce, in that part of the world, was risen to its great-

est height. As the French have ever excelled us in adroitness, and the art of winning the affections, we had no other resource, to put ourselves upon a par with them, but that of compulsion. While they persuaded the Indians, we carried our purposes by force ; and while they won, we alienated their affections.

It would be absurd to institute an enquiry into which party was in the right, when the object of both was certainly not right, but convenience. It would appear still more absurd, when we reflected, that the Indians were the true proprietors ; and that we, on each side, were indeed no better, than robbers, fallen out about the spoil, that they had made upon the innocent and defenceless passenger. But, whatever might have been the sentiments of either party, upon this head, they do not seem, at any time, to have exerted themselves, to put matters in a train of accommodation. France
desired,

desired, under the name of peace to continue her encroachments ; and Great Britain, as usual, began with temporising and delay, and concluded with hastiness and precipitation.

IN the beginning of this dispute, Mr. Pelham died ; fortunately perhaps for his own character ; universally regretted by the nation. The ministry, that he left behind him, and that held their ground for some time after his death, were a body of weakness and inanity, almost without a parallel. The principal figure in this groupe was the duke of Newcastle, brother to the deceased. His abilities were perhaps of the slenderest form, that were ever hazarded in so important a station. He was chiefly distinguished, for his unfeigned attachment to the house of Brunswic, and as one of the leaders of the whig party. He was not however deficient, either in pride, or ambition. It was his delight, to be surrounded with

a crowd of dependents, and to appear distracted with a multiplicity of business. His manners were those of bustling importance. His judgment was confused, headlong and abrupt. At the same time, he was personally disinterested. And the partiality, which every man feels for his own talents, may well be supposed, to have hindered him from suspecting, that the desire he felt to engross the direction of affairs, could possibly be productive of any detriment to his country.

THE temper of this nobleman was exceedingly visible in the measures, now adopted by administration. Fostered by their weakness and indecision, the American dispute got to a head. And when it could be neglected no longer, they ran immediately into the opposite extreme. Instead of sending to the French court their peremptory and ultimate demands, they issued clandestine orders of reprisal; and held up Great Britain under the character

rafter of the pirates of Europe. And instead of directing the whole energy of government, to the increafing our naval force, they employed themfelves in forming expenfive connections upon the continent, that could have no tendency, but to involve us in an unneceffary, general war.

AT this juncture, and upon the meeting of parliament in November, 1755, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, the paymafter general, and fecretary at war, put themfelves at the head of oppofition; and attacked the treaties, lately concluded with Ruffia and Hefle Caffel, with an energy and fpirit, that feemed altogether irrefiftible. No two characters could be more diffimilar. But they agreed in this, the being both of them actuated by an uncontrollable fpirit of ambition. They were fenfible, that the prefent miniftry could not ftand long. By pushing them down the precipice,
they

they expected to advance themselves upon their ruins. And indeed it was impossible for both of them to be disappointed. Accordingly Mr. Fox became secretary of state, and ostensible prime minister; and Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Legge, who had joined in his opposition, were commanded to resign their respective employments.

THOUGH, by this step, the hands of government acquired a temporary addition of strength, yet neither was the spirit of parliamentary opposition much diminished, nor the conduct of foreign affairs at all altered. The succeeding campaign in America was altogether inactive. The administration seemed wholly engrossed by their fears. And the government of France, understanding their weak side, marched several bodies of troops to the coast of our channel, and studiously adopted the appearance of an intended invasion; while their
real

real attack was turned upon the side of Minorca. The stratagem had all the effect its most sanguine friends could have wished. Great Britain was immediately deluged with Hessian and Hanoverian auxiliaries; while the devoted island, was, in a manner, utterly forgotten. But the events that chiefly distinguished this year, and were alone lasting in their consequences, were the alliances concluded between France and Austria on the one hand, and Great Britain and Prussia on the other.

IF the two contending powers in America, were inspired with an insatiable lust of gain; much more were the two great states of Germany, possessed with a most restless spirit of ambition. The loss of Silesia perpetually haunted the reflections, and disturbed the repose of the empress; while her illustrious antagonist appeared not to remain contented with his acquisition. He probably looked
ed

ed forward to some object, of which perhaps himself had no determined idea, but which has certainly never been perfectly understood by the world. With these dispositions, they only waited for an opportunity to declare themselves. And this opportunity was furnished by the mutual cabals of the courts of Versailles and London. The former understood too well our sovereign's predilection for his German dominions, not to foresee their advantage, in distracting the attention, and dividing the force of their enemy, by an attack upon Hanover.

For some time, it was uncertain, which of the Germanic powers should unite with which of the maritime ones. Never did any war commence in such a medley of contradictory treaties. Austria had been our old ally, and, presuming upon her friendship, we had engaged the Russians to make a diversion in her favour. At the same time, we refused
to

to concur with her in her views upon Silesia, and by that means forced her into the arms of France. The king of Prussia, protesting against the admission of any foreign troops into the empire, seemed to our ministers to open a door to a more intimate connexion. He was not backward to embrace the proposals, that were made him. And thus we exchanged our old and natural ally, for a prince, who must be supported by an enormous subsidy, and whose friendship could never afford us the smallest advantage. We paved the way to a fresh example of those singular confederacies; not, of many smaller powers to reduce one overgrown one; but of several, the greatest powers upon earth, combined for the destruction of one state, small in extent, and shallow in its resources.

In the mean time, these proceedings, however injudicious, were perhaps too complicated for the level of popular decision.

sion. But the loss of Minorca blew up the flame of national resentment to its highest pitch. By a train of insidious arts, the ministry were able to throw the weight of it, in a good measure, off themselves, upon the admiral they had employed. Accordingly he was soon after sacrificed, in a manner, which whatever may be the opinion we form of the merits of his conduct, was undoubtedly disgraceful to the nation, and infamous to the persons concerned. And, after all, the administration remained so unpopular, that Mr. Fox soon after thought proper to resign. The motive of his conduct was supposed, to be an unwillingness to bear the odium of measures, in the forming of which he was allowed very little share. He probably thought this embarrassment not unfavourable to his views, and threw up his employment, with the hope of speedily resuming it, upon more advantageous terms.

OF

OF the numerous disciples of sir Robert Walpole, Mr. Fox was the individual that most resembled him. He however finally became more unpopular than that minister ever was. His manners had something less of the plausible; and his temper, especially towards the close of his life, was infinitely more rapacious. In his turn of mind, however, there appeared something, less distant from the character of a great minister.

UPON the removal of this principal prop, the whole structure of administration fell to pieces. Those, who had so long retained their influence in the cabinet, thought proper, at least in appearance, to retire from the direction of affairs. And Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Legge, the two most popular characters in Britain, were now admitted into the responsible offices of government. But as, on the one hand, it was not intended, to cede to them the power of administration; so
on

on the other, they were found in no degree adapted to the purposes designed. They were, as it should seem, too fresh from opposition. They could not immediately adopt the pliant manners of a court, or lay aside those principles, to which they had been indebted for their popularity. They were not of a temper, to submit to be the tools, or the scape-goats of an interior cabinet. They had too high a sense of the consequence they had acquired, lightly or inconsiderately to sacrifice it. Accordingly they opposed, both in council and in parliament, every measure, however patronised, that they apprehended pernicious. And even their concessions, for concessions, it must be owned, they made, came with so ill a grace, and were so clogged by the conditions, that accompanied them, that they tended rather to irritate, than to reconcile.

THE efficient ministers, tired of perpetual thwarting, and convinced, that
their

their arrangement must prove abortive, spared no pains, to prepossess their sovereign against his new servants; and determined, at all events, to expel them from the government. It should seem, that the king had long since conceived a prejudice against Mr. Pitt. Though it had been frequent, to appoint the paymastergeneral one of the lords of regency, during the king's absence upon the continent, this had never been done, while Mr. Pitt held that office; and even, in one instance, the secretary at war had been appointed, in a manner, over his head. This celebrated commoner had almost uniformly opposed those continental measures, to which his sovereign was known to be so much attached; and, as his language was vigorous and decisive, it probably left an impression upon the royal breast. And undoubtedly those, who immediately surrounded the throne, had taken care to represent him, as haughty, imperious and uncourtierly. They

E

even

even intimated their suspicions of his loyalty. Thus artfully undermined, he was once more honoured with the royal command to resign. Mr. Legge, earl Temple, whose sister he had lately married, and many other of his friends, accompanied him in his retreat. Their country remained, for near three months, in the very heat of war, absolutely destitute of any regular administration.

It is truly wonderful, that a set of men, weak, timid, incapable and rash, beyond example, not contented with their influence in the disposal of places and pensions, should have continued thus obstinately set, upon retaining the direction of a complicated and most perilous war. For more than two years, they had exhibited an unvaried scene of defeat and dishonour. They had reduced their country to the brink of destruction. And, at the same time, by their cabals at home, they had caused the spirit of
party

party to be every where substituted for the spirit of patriotism. The more imminent were the distresses of Britain, the more irreconcilable were the factions, that divided it.

C H A P. III.

Coalition of parties.—Mr. Pitt's administration.—Progress of the war.—Campaign of 1759.—Fruitless negotiations of peace.

THE situation of Mr. Pitt, at this crisis, was, in one respect, more extraordinary, and more honourable, than any of those, by which the latter part of his history was distinguished. Without any practical knowledge of his abilities; and attracted only, by his consummate eloquence, his singular disinterestedness, and the supposed purity of his views; the people of England united to look up to him, as to the person, in whom they confided, for the salvation of their country.

THE whole nation seemed to rise up, as one man, in vindication of the character

ter of the exiled patriots. The most respectable cities and corporations presented them with the freedom of their respective bodies; and addresses were sent up from all parts of the kingdom, soliciting their restoration to their respective employments. It were, at once, difficult, and uninteresting, to trace the steps, by which the subsequent coalition was effected. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Pitt was again restored to the office of secretary of state; the duke of Newcastle was placed at the head of the treasury; and Mr. Fox was gratified with the appointment of paymaster general. Each of them brought in his respective friends; and thus the three great parties, into which the government was rent, were happily brought, in some manner, to cooperate for the welfare of their country.

It is, at this moment, that Mr. Pitt's administration properly commences. During the short time he had before held

the seals, his influence in the cabinet appears to have been very small; and it would perhaps be difficult, to lay our hand upon that measure of government, which properly originated with him. Now he assumed, not by his influence with the sovereign, but by his popularity with the nation, that ascendancy in our public councils, which lord Carteret had formerly enjoyed, under more hostile auspices, and with less happy consequences.

As it is by this period of the life of lord Chatham, that his public merit is principally to be estimated, we shall doubtless be excusable here, if we run out into greater length, or more frequent reflections, than upon any other part of our subject. We have seen, in the example of lord Carteret, how unsuccessful a coalition usually proves. We shall see, in the present, a coalition, succeeding beyond all reasonable expectation; the
most

most heterogeneous ingredients, and the utmost harmony. But it is from the former, and not the latter, that a general rule is to be deduced. A thousand circumstances combine to render the present a singular case. Both the other parties had made their trial, and may be supposed to have been, in some measure, convinced of their incapacity. And the abilities of Mr. Pitt, were palpably such, as, by no means, to afford ground for a general conclusion. Any principle may doubtless be pushed too far. At the same time, it must be owned, that moderate abilities, at least, may be most effectually exerted in connexion; and that man must be singularly formed, who cannot meet with those, whose general principles of government coincide with his own, and with whom he can honestly concur in the usual tenor of their conduct. Truly pitiable is the country, that cannot afford an administration of honest views, and uniform principles; or that

has not virtue enough left to support such an administration, against the opposition of the interested, and the cabals of faction !

The first step Mr. Pitt made, was to give up those principles, which had led him to oppose a continental war ; and to fall implicitly into the views of his sovereign. It may be alledged in his excuse, that the alliances were already made, and the war had assumed its form, before he was called to the head of affairs. He may be supposed to have been partly actuated, by a sentiment of generosity for the king of Prussia ; upon whom the measures of his predecessors had contributed to bring a combination of the most powerful states in Europe, and whom it would now be cruel to desert. And, above all, he probably found this to be the alternative ; that he must either serve his country in the way prescribed him, or not serve her at all. A continental war would inevitably

evitably be prosecuted. At any rate, it was pernicious. If prosecuted without popularity, and without abilities, it must be destructive. If carried on with unanimity and energy, it might be productive of glory, if not of advantage, and the impending ruin be warded off.

BUT why should we endeavour to conceal the truth? Mr. Pitt, I have already said, was possessed with a spirit of boundless ambition. As the leading trait, by which he had hitherto been distinguished, was eloquence, it was the gown, that seemed destined for the scene of his renown. His ambition was not subservient to the desire of luxury and ease; he was disinterested. The mere possession of power was not calculated to gratify it. Upon power, plodding, useless, torpid and supine, he looked down with contempt. It must be gilded with the rays of glory; it must be stamped with the dignity of patriotism; or it was not worth his acceptance.

THERE

THERE are but two ways, in which for the minister of a free country to acquire to himself immortal honour. By renovating the vigour of its original constitution, by counteracting the tide of venality and corruption, and erecting new mounds against the encroachments of despotism. This seems to have been the path, that Mr. Pitt first chalked out to himself. For that end, with the unconquerable spirit of a Roman, he set himself to oppose the destructive system of Walpole. Too happy Britain, had the abilities of thy first and noblest statesman been thus employed !

BUT riper years and maturer deliberation taught him, that his country was too far advanced in imbecility, to make the execution of his first scheme probable ; that circumstances were by no means favourable ; and that nothing, at any rate, but great and marked calamities, could be expected to awaken her
from

from her slumber. And there yet remained another path open. A path too, that led to more certain, more immediate, more undivided applause. He might exchange the cold hand of reform, and the austere spirit of independence, for the brilliancy of success against a foreign enemy, and for the trophies of conquest. Britain was once again plunged in a complicated war, and seemed advancing with hasty steps to her ruin. Himself had almost passed the meridian of his life. Like Themistocles, the trophies of his ancestors would not let him sleep; and, like Cæsar, he wept to think, how many had closed a career of honour, at a period of life, at which he had done little to distinguish himself. Now he felt was the crisis of his fate. Now he must rise to glory, or fall for ever down the stream of oblivion. He snatched the ruling helm. He silenced the cabals of a rival, and the discontents of the governed. He braved the tempests of the deep.

ONE

ONE of the first measures of his administration was the expedition against Rochfort. Though carried on with a secrecy, that had hitherto been thought incompatible with the nature of our government, it proved in the end most despicably abortive. In the mean time, the Hanoverian army, under the duke of Cumberland, was compelled to surrender. The campaign in America was wholly spent in the forming of plans, in order afterwards to reject them; and the largest and best-appointed army, that continent had ever seen, was kept in total inaction. Thus the campaign of 1757 closed, like the campaign of 1756, without any thing being done, correspondent to the public expectations.

POPULAR applause is in its very nature inconstant; and what had now happened, were enough, to have damned the reputation of any other man. The changing of sides, in order to the coming

ing into power, must ever be disreputable. The officers, that had been sent against the French coast, made no scruple to impute the failure of their enterprise, to its having been originally formed upon insufficient intelligence. And, though it does not appear, that Mr. Pitt had any immediate concern in the other business of the campaign; yet the coincidence of times often prevents an attention to a circumstance, like this, among the vulgar. But fame, in the present instance, as if to vindicate her character, did not once desert her favourite. All Mr. Pitt's apologies were admitted; his preparations for another campaign cheerfully concurred in; and the popular expectations once more became, as sanguine as ever.

BUT if the disappointment did not strongly affect the public, it however sunk deep into the spirit of Mr. Pitt. In public he complained loudly of the military

tary commanders; and lamented, that scarcely a man could be found, with whom the execution of a plan of enterprise and peril, could with confidence be trusted. With himself, he doubtless reflected, whether the failure of success, in any degree, remained with him. He was not afraid to see his errors; and he had too much spirit, not to wish, by the mistakes of the past, to improve his conduct for the future. I believe, the charge brought against him, by the commanders at Rochfort, of the superficiality of his intelligence, was, in some degree, founded. Accordingly he probably felt its justice; and laboured, with unwearied ardour, to remove it; till, at length, he perfected a degree of information, that was perhaps superior, to what had ever been obtained in this, or any other court in Europe. In a word, he felt his abilities; he saw the theatre in which he was placed; the eyes of the nation, the eyes of the world animated him; and

and he burned to signalise himself, in a manner, worthy of the hopes he had excited.

FROM the peace of Utrecht, to the moment, in which I am writing, the character of Britain has been entirely different, from what the annals of former ages have exhibited her. The national debt has drained her resources. The influence of corruption has enervated her spirit. Ruin and imbecility have crept upon her with incessant, unobserved steps. It is the glory of Mr. Pitt, to have changed the scene. Like the comet, he spread a transitory splendour over the prospect, and drew a stream of lustre in his train. Hitherto our councils had been weak, inconstant and contradictory. Our exertions had been impotent. In peace we were despised. In war we were baffled, defeated, and disgraced. The present war had indeed begun in unmeaning precipitation. In
its

its progress we were passive. We did not so properly resist. We suffered whatever the enemy saw fit to inflict upon us.

NEVER was the great scene of things so suddenly shifted, as in the instance before us. Whatever comprehensive genius, extended intelligence, deep political knowledge, and indefatigable industry could effect, was ours. From torpid supineness, we astonished the enemy with unremitted activity. Not a ship, not a man, was suffered to remain unemployed. Europe, America, Africa felt the influence of Mr. Pitt's character in an instant. His glory, in the mean time, advanced, like a regular fabric. Gradual in its commencement, it however discovered, to the discerning eye, a grandeur of design, and promised the most magnificent effect. By degrees, it disclosed beauty, utility and majesty; it outstretched the eye of the spectator, and hid its head among the clouds.

THOUGH

THOUGH the preceding year had been unaccompanied with any successes to the British arms; it is however the most brilliant period in the history of our illustrious ally. He commenced it with a considerable victory, which was succeeded by a still more considerable, and apparently decisive, defeat. But, like Antinous, he rose more dreadful from his fall, and closed the year with the successes of Rosbach and Lissa; successes, that seemed to wither the everlasting laurels of an Alexander. Such is the story of this period: and, as a contemporary writer has expressed it, “It is not the story of a century; it is the account of a single campaign.”

THE victories of Frederic enabled the Hanoverian army to renew their hostilities. The French general, in using his superiority, had laid aside the principles, both of policy, and humanity; and the time was now come for him to

F

feel

feel the resentment of those, upon whom he had trampled. No occasional compact can annihilate the eternal rights of humanity. Even the surrender in question, had been made upon mutual conditions; and neither party had certainly a right to the advantages, stipulated in his favour; unless, on his side, he punctually fulfilled the conditions, that were made in behalf of his adversary. In the mean time, the cause of the allies did not now seem more favoured of justice, than of fortune. They expelled the enemy from their own territories, and pursued them into the kingdom of France itself.

FOR the rest, the campaign of 1758 was chequered with victory and defeat. We conquered the French settlements on the coast of Africa; we lost Fort St. David's in the East-Indies. We subdued Louisbourg and the island of Cape Breton; we were repulsed with loss at Ticonderoga.

roga. In our predatory expeditions, we were victorious at Cherbourg; we were defeated at St. Cas.

It seems to me, that these expeditions ought not to be passed over without animadversion. They undoubtedly manifested vigour and spirit. They, in some measure, answered the ends, for which they were designed. But they exhibit war in its most horrid form. It were visionary, in these scenes of rapine, to expect to restrain them, merely to the destruction of the implements of offence. They will ever fall, with the greatest severity, upon the innocent and unresisting.—War must be considered, by the soul of humanity, as the scourge of human kind. Her laws, if we are to credit the expositions of them, that have recently been made by men, who would be thought skilful in the science, may be brought to countenance every wantonness, and every barbarity. But

humanity looks above this. Whatever gives new ruggedness to the horrid scene, and a wider spread to the field of blood, she will ever regard with unmingled abhorrence.

THE memory of the subsequent campaign will certainly never be erased from the minds of its contemporaries. It was one tissue of victory. It was distinguished by the battle of Minden, the most considerable action in the course of the German war. In it, we acquired that ascendancy in the East-Indies, which we have ever since been enabled to maintain. We captured the island of Guadeloupe, one of the most valuable of the French sugar plantations. We subdued the fortress of Niagara, and possessed ourselves without opposition of Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

BUT the most illustrious action of the whole war, was the siege of Quebec.

This

EARL OF CHATHAM. 85

This was the chief object of the enemy's attention, and the central point of the British operations. Ministry have been censured for sending a force of only 7000 men, against a place, strong by nature, defended with a numerous garrison, and covered by an army, whose numbers did not fall short of 10,000; and for placing a principal stress upon the junction of distant armies, which, to say the least, was in the highest degree difficult. But, if this part of their conduct was thought to favour of rashness, every voice joined to approve of the choice they made of a commander. Never were operations conducted with so much gallantry and spirit. Indeed the success of the expedition appeared to have been entirely owing to the general, that conducted it. Convinced of the hazardous nature of his enterprise, he trod upon the very verge of prudent daring, without being guilty of one act of useless temerity. He could not content himself with the cold conso-

lation of having done his duty. Repulsed in the outset, his chagrin preyed upon his animal frame, and brought on a dangerous fever. He buried himself in solitude; expressed his disappointment in frequent sighs; and declared, that he would never return without success, to be exposed to the censure of an ignorant and ungrateful populace. At length he retrieved his health; renewed his efforts; surmounted every obstacle, both of nature and art; and expired in the arms of victory. Generous, happy spirit! thy memory shall ever live in the gratitude of thy country, and distant ages shall imbibe gallantry and heroism from thy example!

In the meantime, the French thought to turn the tables upon us, and, in their turn, threatened our coasts with an invasion. But, in this design, they were completely baffled. A great part of their preparations were destroyed in the bombardment

ment of Havre ; and two considerable fleets, which they had destined for the execution, were beaten, one in the Mediterranean, and the other off the island of Belleisle. Their navy was, in a manner, annihilated. And, to close the scene, they were obliged to stop payment upon twelve different branches of their national debt.—Never was one year crowded with so brilliant successes. Not an enterprise failed. The military glory of Britain rose to its highest pitch. While our wealth was poured, without restraint, into the insatiable receptacle of Germany ; one would have thought, in contemplating our national and naval operations, that our whole strength and utmost efforts had been centered there.

FROM this period however, the operations of war were relaxed. The campaign in America amounted simply to a well-concerted and fortunate pursuit of the objects of the preceding, and was closed with the total reduction of the

province of Canada. In the West-Indies we were entirely inactive. At home, we distinguished ourselves only, by the destruction of a small remnant of the French fleet under Thurot, and by fresh preparations for a secret expedition, which was afterwards laid aside.

Two reasons may be assigned for our remissness. The first was the desire of peace. Mr. Pitt has been represented by his enemies, as a man of blood ; restless, and perturbed ; whose element was war, and his delight commotion and tempest. It is indeed natural enough to imagine, that his high spirit and ever-active temper should, upon some occasions, have given him too strong a bias towards violent counsels. He was not, it may be, apt to balance, with sufficient accuracy, our provocations and our resources. And he seems to have conceived, that the nice sense of honour, which animates a private individual, to repel an insult, under whatever disadvantages, is also commendable

able in the disputes of mighty states, and the affairs of millions. Nature had, in a great measure, disqualified him for a temporiser. And it may perhaps be allowed, that he was somewhat too haughty in his tone, and too ostentatious of superiority, in his transactions with foreign ministers.

THESE concessions however must be understood with certain allowances. If he were, in any case, led aside from the paths of rectitude, it seems uniformly to have been, by the natural superiority and warmth of his temper. In principle, he certainly preferred the substantial prosperity of his country to the most brilliant victories. And, accordingly, we shall find, in many instances, his temper subjected to his better judgment. It was, upon this ground, that he approved the peace of 1748. It was, upon this ground, that he acted in the matter before us. His heart bled for the disasters of war; and he beheld, with equal
astonishment

astonishment and regret, the great expence, that it occasioned. He perceived, at once, that every object, that the most sanguine ambition could desire, was insured to us by the successes of 1759. And he placed himself in that situation, which, in the former instance, had reflected as much honour, as could be derived, upon the feeble Louis ; of being the first to hold forth, in the very centre of conquest, the offers of conciliation. For the present however, these offers had no consequence.

THE other cause of our remissness is less honourable to my hero. The war became every day more and more Germanised. Fresh reinforcements were poured, without restraint upon the continent, and our attention seemed diverted to that single object. Mr. Pitt undertook to persuade the house of commons, and, as it should seem, not without some degree of success, that this was the proper

per field for weakening the French power; and that America was conquered in the plains of Westphalia. “So much easier
 “is it,” says my lord Chesterfield, “to
 “mislead the people, than to persuade
 “them to the pursuit of their real
 “interests.”

THOUGH the first advances towards peace were ineffectual, they however paved the way for the negociation, that was drawn out into length, and formed the principal business of 1761. Our only military exertion, the capture of Belleisle, was a link in the chain; and was designed to form one of the compensations in the intended exchange.—By the advances we had made, we gained some credit for moderation with the neutral powers. France therefore was willing to take a similar step. Her distresses were real; and she probably was not averse to come to a serious conclusion, provided the concessions, required of her, were not too mortifying.

mortifying. She hoped at worst, like Louis the fourteenth in the war of queen Anne, to display her own reasonableness, and make the haughtiness of England offensive in the eyes of Europe. And she had a yet further, and more secret purpose to answer. She had been, for some time, not without a share of success, forming cabals in the court of the new king of Spain. They were come to a pretty good understanding. And, by this step, she hoped to put a finishing hand to the business.

THE first proceedings, on her side, were fair, open and honourable. On ours, we preserved dignity, without, at any time, losing sight of moderation and humanity. The patriotism of the secretary sufficiently disposed him to peace; and, more than once, he receded from his first demands, in deference to the opinion of his fellow ministers. His manners indeed were firm, and his temper
unsubmitting.

unsubmitting. But, in the substantial part of the business, his conduct was unexceptionable. In a word, every thing bore the most auspicious appearance.

At this time, a memorial, in behalf of the king of Spain, relative to such points, as are usually to be found in dispute among powers, whose commercial interests interfere, was put into Mr. Pitt's hands by the French minister. It was altogether unprecedented and extraordinary, to see a proposal, for accommodating disputes between friendly powers, coming through the channel of an enemy. It was alarming with respect to Spain. It gave the justest reason to suspect the sincerity of the French advances. Accordingly, though the negotiation was continued, all confidence and good humour were lost. The sole design of either party was to throw the blame of the final breach upon their adversary.

THE

THE two points upon which we ostensibly separated were these. The one, the restoration of the captures we had made, before the declaration of war. In this claim the French were determined, and they supported it with very forcible and striking arguments. A cession of this nature, at a time, in which we could dictate the terms of accommodation, had been a glorious sacrifice to the laws of reason and humanity. But, in this light, it did not appear to Mr. Pitt.—The other point of difference, respected our allies. France proposed a neutrality in the empire, but refused to give up the conquests she had made upon Prussia, and which she professed to hold in trust for the empress. The proposition for a separate peace had come from the English secretary : but he rejected that for a neutrality, as an attempt upon the good faith of his country ; and peremptorily insisted upon the demands for restitution. This was a matter of delicate adjustment in
any

any case. In the present cold and suspicious temper of the two courts, the adjustment was absolutely impracticable. The négociations were finally broken off; and we separated with a humour, more adverse, and intentions, more hostile, than ever.

CHAP,

C H A P. IV.

Origin of the war with Spain.—Death of king George the second.—Cabals of lord Bute.—Mr. Pitt resigns.—Critique of his administration.

MR. Pitt had, in the mean time, called upon the Spanish ambassador, to disavow the memorial of the French negociator. He avowed it in the most offensive terms; he avowed the union, that subsisted between the two courts; and extolled the generousness and sincerity of the French advances. Mr. Pitt then wrote, upon the same subject, to our ambassador at the court of Madrid. He represented the memorial, as offensive and insolent. At the same time, he directed the minister, in case he should perceive a disposition in that court, to explain away their concern in the business;

ness; with readiness and address, to adapt himself to so desirable a circumstance; and to open to the Spaniard as handsome a retreat, as possible. The answer from Madrid, though accompanied with those professions of amity, which, in political transactions, seem ever to be most carefully employed, upon the eve of a declaration of war, was not a whit more satisfactory, than that, which had been given by their ambassador here. In the mean time, Mr. Pitt had received the most undoubted intelligence of the conclusion of the celebrated family compact. This alliance, which fell little short of a union of the monarchies, seemed almost alone sufficient, to authorise a rupture, when it was become, in a manner, impossible, to distinguish between the two powers.

THE situation I have described, formed a new era in the theatre of contention. Like a lion, who repeatedly urg-

G ed,

ed, repeatedly delaying to rouse himself from his slumber, at length arises in his might; so majestic and terrible appeared the British minister. All temporising, all relaxation of the spirit of enterprize was at an end. The energy and activity, with which his administration had commenced, seemed now redoubled. Those vast conceptions, and that comprehensive view, by which his character was distinguished, animated him with renewed vigour, when he felt himself about to act upon a more extended scale. He determined to be before-hand with the enemy, and to come to immediate action. He formed a plan for the seizure of the Spanish flota, upon which their revenue, in a great measure, depends. He seems even to have imagined a descent upon Cadiz. He instantly destined a considerable force for the capture of Martinique; and he probably regarded this, as a prelude, to an attack upon the Spanish settlements in that part of the world. As all
his

his conceptions were manly, he doubtless, in that case, would have begun with the most considerable, that of the Havannah. But a mine was, at this moment, sprung, that dispersed all his projects; and put an end to an administration, which had given lustre, before unknown, to the honoured name of Britain.

THE campaign of 1759 had dazzled the people of England. The campaign of 1760, less brilliant and active, restored them to their senses. They began to reflect on the nature of that continental war, in which they were involved. They could not forget, that Mr. Pitt had heretofore been its warmest opponent. His fervid, caustic style of eloquence, that made so lasting an impression upon his auditors, was little calculated for a man, versatile and uncertain in his political principles. They recollected the time, when he had declared with an energy, peculiarly his own, that he would never

consent to our sparing "a man,—no, not
"half a man," to maintain a continental
quarrel in the fields of Germany.—Independently of this circumstance, they recollected the nature of those continental connections, which had heretofore been so much the object of dispute. They had all been confederacies of many considerable powers in Europe, to check the ambitious views of France. No man had dared to propose our engaging in such a field, without that support. No man had thought of opposing himself to any thing, but our unnecessarily taking the lead in the dispute, and exerting ourselves beyond the proportion of the rest of the allies. What judgment then must they form of a case, in which Europe was so far from being alarmed by the ambition of France, that all her most considerable powers combined in her favour? What judgment must they form of a case, in which we singly encountered them all; in which victory appeared unaccompanied
with

with advantage, and defeat was doubly destructive.—Add to this, they could not but behold with regret the treasures, that were squandered upon this useless object. Had the half of them been diverted into the line of maritime exertion, our success, they believed, had been unbounded; and a peace equally speedy and honourable.

THE seeds of this kind of disaffection were already disseminated, and there seemed nothing wanting, but an able statesman, to turn them to his own advantage. In the mean time, king George the second, in complaisance to whose prejudices the continental war had been undertaken, died. His reign had been long, and he died more advanced in age, than any of his predecessors. Notwithstanding which, he had the rare fortune, of dying in the height of popular veneration, and was sincerely regretted by the whole kingdom. He had few personal attach-

ments to his ministers. And, though Mr. Pitt was originally forced upon him, much against his inclination ; yet the success of his schemes at length effected a reconciliation ; and he had the happiness, to be, at once, high in the favour of his sovereign, and the object of applause and adoration to the people.

THE predilection of one monarch, is rarely a recommendation to the good opinion of his successor. Mr. Pitt however, for the present, retained his situation. But the young prince had a governor and a friend, who gave a new turn to the politics of the kingdom, and makes a conspicuous figure in the history of the reign. It was the earl of Bute. His temper was recluse and reserved. The sciences, to which he was attached, were those, that consist in cold and minute investigation. He was hesitating, prevaricating and timid ; the qualities, that form the discriminating character of a student.

student. The library, and not the cabinet, was the scene, for which nature had destined him. In the mean time, he was sensible to the goad of ambition. With that conceit of his own talents, which solitude is calculated to inspire, he formed no less a plan, than to drive, from the helm of affairs, the most popular,—I had almost said, the ablest minister, by whom it was ever guided; and to seize, once for all, the government of a mighty kingdom.

He began by turning to account that dislike, which was insensibly gaining ground, to the continental system. He carefully discriminated those principles, and held forth his pupil, as the deliverer of England from so enormous a burden. In the next place, he examined the materials, of which the administration was composed. They were heterogeneous and dissimilar. Nothing, but the predominant abilities of Mr. Pitt, had held

them together for so long a time. Of the two other leaders, Mr. Fox had a personal animosity to the secretary; and the duke of Newcastle looked back, with regret, to the time, in which he had so impotently wielded the government of his country, without control. The path of the favourite was, in this case, obvious and easy. He entered into an intimate connexion with Mr. Fox, who was too penetrating to be deceived, and whose skill in parliamentary management would do him the most essential service. Of the duke of Newcastle, weak and aspiring, he bought the assistance, at a cheaper rate, by flattering the fond expectations he had formed from the fall of his rival.

THE influence of the secretary was now sensibly declining. One of the most striking symptoms, and which ought to have given him the most serious alarm, was the dismissal of his faithful associate, Mr. Legge, from the superintendency

dency of the finances. But, as he had always acted alone, and not inlisted himself in a party; so he seems never to have formed any violent attachments. He probably considered his influence, as of a species of its own, and necessarily uncontrollable. The earl of Bute was, at the same time, appointed secretary of state, together with Mr. Pitt.

At length, in the critical moment, in which his imagination was fired with its largest, and most comprehensive plan, he found himself suddenly and invincibly prevented. In the councils, that were held upon this business, he demonstrated, in a manner, he apprehended, the most incontestible, the hostile dispositions of Spain. He expatiated upon the alarming nature of the family compact, of the conclusion of which he had received the fullest intelligence. He told them, that this was the instant to attack Spain, unprepared and with advantage. Even while
they

they deliberated, the time would be past. Now she was willing to temporise. So soon as her treasure were safe in her harbours, he prophesied, with the utmost confidence, she would keep terms with us no longer. Beyond that time, we might endeavour to defer hostilities, in vain.—These things however, with whatever else he could urge, were to no purpose. He found the whole council, with a single exception, (earl Temple,) dividing against him. They represented it, as little less than madness, in their present situation, to engage precipitately with a new enemy. In the mean time, they declared themselves willing, to maintain the honour of Britain, and, if expostulations proved ineffectual, to support the secretary in the vigorous prosecution of a war.

THREE times was this important question deliberated. At length, Mr. Pitt rose up, and declared once more, that
this,

this, he was convinced, was the time for humbling the whole house of Bourbon; that, this opportunity omitted, it could never be recovered; and, of consequence, since he could not prevail here, he was resolved, that should be the last time he would sit in council. He thanked the ministers of the late king for their support. He said, that, for his own part, he had been called into administration by the voice of the people; to them, he considered himself, as accountable for his conduct; and he could not remain in a situation, that made him responsible for measures, which he was no longer allowed to guide.

It had been the glory of Mr. Pitt's government, to abolish the spirit of party, and to introduce into the senate an unanimity, hitherto unexperienced. The ambition of lord Bute brought things back again to their original chaos, and gave new life to all the bitterness
and

and implacability of faction. A circumstance, that occurred, at this time, deserves to be mentioned, for the singularity, that attended it. Upon Mr. Pitt's declaring his intention to resign, earl Granville, formerly lord Carteret, who had, for some time, possessed the appointment of president of the council, rose up to speak.—We are here presented with the incident, which faction took to work upon. One party represent him, as addressing the secretary, with all the asperity of studied insult. “I find,” said he, “the gentleman is determined to leave us, nor can I say, I am sorry for it. He would otherwise have certainly obliged us to leave him. If indeed he be resolved to appropriate the right of advising his majesty, and directing the operations of war, to what purpose are we called to this council? He talks of being responsible to the people. Let him remember, that this is to talk the language of the house of commons;

“ commons ; and that, at this board, he
 “ is responsible only to the king. He
 “ may possibly have convinced himself
 “ of his infallibility. But it still remains,
 “ that we should be equally convinced ;
 “ before we can resign our understand-
 “ ings to his direction, or join with him
 “ in the measures he proposes.”—According
 ing to the account however of Mr. Pitt’s
 advocates, lord Granville repeatedly and
 publicly denied the having said any thing
 of this sort. On the contrary, they re-
 present him, as having declared his very
 high opinion of the secretary’s wisdom,
 penetration, honour and integrity ; and
 as stating, in a most particular and em-
 phatical manner, the many and insur-
 mountable difficulties, with which he
 had had to struggle.—The authorities, by
 which these two very different accounts
 have been vouched to the public, are so
 equally matched, that we have nothing,
 but the internal evidence of each, by
 which to determine our preference.

THE

THE consequences of the procrastination of the English government were doubtless highly disadvantageous. If they could have been prevented, without any breach of honour and dignity, the not preventing them did certainly deserve the loudest condemnation. If Mr. Pitt meant, as he probably did; and as the reference, made, by his friends, to the manner, in which the war originally commenced, strongly confirms; to set out with acts of piracy and surprise: I believe, the philosopher, and the citizen of the world, will not hesitate to pronounce, that advantages, however great that must be so bought, must be bought too dear. *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum*, is perhaps an hyperbolical maxim, that will not admit of a strict examination. The principle however, in which it is founded, is not less just, than it is beautiful. In the mean time, it is certain, that the delay of the succeeding ministers was greater, than such a principle could require. How far

far the schemes of Mr. Pitt might have been reconciled, with open proceedings, and an honest declaration of war, I will not take upon me to pronounce. It may not however be improper to remark, that this is one of repeated instances, which the discerning eye will observe, in the course of this history, to prove, how far exalted genius is compatable with local prejudices; and how difficult it is, to be, at once, a great statesman, and a citizen of the world.

THE resignation of Mr. Pitt was certainly founded in the highest rectitude. Responsibility is the first principle of a free government; and the confidence of the people the only basis of a good administration. By a cabinet, whose opposition to him was unqualified, in so leading a measure, he could expect to be allowed no scope of action, nor the smallest particle of discretionary power. The disadvantageous effects, that flowed from an
opposite

opposite line of conduct, demonstrate the magnitude of the question, that divided them. Mr. Pitt's secession was necessary, in candour to the people, and to enable them to fix the era of the change of measures. It was a piece of friendship to his brother ministers, from whose schemes if any success could be expected, it could certainly be most rationally expected, when they were permitted to act, without distraction, and without control.

MR. Pitt resigned on the fifth of October. On the eleventh, his resignation was signified in the gazette, together with the creation of lady Hester Pitt, his wife, baroness of Chatham, and his own acceptance of an annuity of £3000. At the same time, it contained an article of intelligence from Madrid, calculated to evince the pacific intentions of that court, and of consequence, to show the weakness and precipitation of Mr. Pitt's advice. By this artifice, the
earl

earl of Bute hoped, in some measure, to turn the tide of popular disapprobation. In the mean time, he added the employment of a set of unprincipled scribblers, to place these circumstances in the most favourable light, and to asperse and vilify the character of the saviour of their country.

ONE of the points, upon which they expatiated, was the reduced condition of the king of Prussia. He had struggled, for six campaigns, against all Europe, in a manner, combined against him, with an activity, fortitude and perseverance, that surpasses all former examples of heroism. Never was it known, that a confederacy, made up of so disjointed materials, should have continued so long unbroken. At length, exhausted, and intrenched upon, on every side, it seemed, as if nothing, but an immediate interposition of providence, could preserve him from ruin. This interposition soon after

H took

took place in the death of the Czarina : an event, that opened an immediate vista through the gloom, and gradually obtained for him such a superiority over his antagonists, as enabled him to dictate the terms of accommodation.

In the mean time, it seemed not improbable, that another campaign might have been fatal to him. The ruin of the king of Prussia, must necessarily have been followed, by the destruction of the army in Westphalia. With a foresight of these circumstances, Mr. Pitt, they said, had sought to divert the attention of the public, by involving us in a new quarrel with the court of Madrid. Disappointed in this, having steered the vessel of the state into the midst of shoals and quicksands, he deserted the helm in rage and despair ; and left his fellow ministers to extricate themselves, as they could.— How reasonable this is in itself, and how consistent with the character of Mr. Pitt, I shall leave to my readers to determine.

*In this figurative style is well adapted to deception
a political difficulty, as palpable as a Ship on
a shoal — the one is on the mind only —
the other on the body — one maybe — the
other is —*

IN the mean time, this part of their accusation, seems to have left no impression upon the minds of the people. In another charge they brought against him, they had somewhat better success. The cry of pension is one of the watch-words of vulgar indignation, and it was not entirely without its effect. But the people of England were not long misled in this respect. They presently saw through, and despised the stratagem, that was attempted to be played upon them. The generosity of a free country could not suffer them to be blinded to so essential services. In a word, Mr. Pitt lost little, or nothing of his popularity, and the general indignation fell back, with redoubled violence, upon his successors.

IN the mean time, I am not apprehensive, that, with the cool and impartial, Mr. Pitt's conduct will need any vindication. If the public money were always bestowed in this proportion to de-

fert, there would certainly be no danger of its being squandered. The most disinterested character, that lives, when he has a posterity to provide for, may surely be allowed to accept so small an acknowledgement, for so signal services. The multitude are too apt to confound such an acceptance, with an infamous bargain for the sacrifice of integrity. But certainly nothing of this sort is necessarily included. Should we allow it to imply a sort of obligation, not to run into all the asperities of faction; let it be remembered, that this were also unworthy of the exaltation of Mr. Pitt's character, and the vast space, that he filled in the eye of his country. And it ought not, in any just construction, to interfere, with a cool, manly and independent declaration of sentiment upon any occasion.

HAVING brought the story of Mr. Pitt's administration to a close, it may be worth
while

while, to endeavour to form a general estimate of its merits. The same spirit of party, that, in a former instance, had induced its infatuated votaries, to question the duke of Marlborough's capacity as a general; did not fail, in the present case, to induce some persons to assert, that the successes of Mr Pitt's ministry, were owing intirely to the commanders, that executed, and, in no degree, to the minister, that planned them. In himself, he was headstrong and precipitate; but fortune smiled, and victory set her seal upon his undertakings.

It must be owned, that the good conduct of a general, in any particular instance, is, in some degree, more palpable, than the good conduct of a minister at war. It is difficult, upon the most circumstantial documents, and, in a manner, impossible, upon a cursory view, to draw the line, where the merit of the project ends, and that of the execution begins.

But, without entering into such detail, there is a general evidence arises, sufficient to determine every intelligent spectator. In a single instance, a man may be fortunate, or well supported; he may be victorious, without merit, and even handed down to immortality, without having possessed, either fortitude, or common sense. But a chain of successes carries conviction upon the face of it.

IN the mean time, we need not here confine ourselves to reasonings, which apply equally in a thousand cases. There is a lustre in the present, that is peculiar to Mr. Pitt. We need but contrast the first years of the war, with those, that immediately succeeded the period, in which he assumed the direction of affairs, in order to the being struck with the fullest conviction. During the former, all was weakness, dejection, stupour and inanity. In the commencement of the latter, vigour presented itself

self in the place of remissness; and the gallantry of invasion succeeded to the cowardice of unresisting passivity. Lately, the nation seemed to be made up of isolated individuals, where each man was left, by his uninterested neighbour, to the defence of his own person and property. Now, they were formed into an unconquerable army of brothers, and their exertions concentrated by the ardent spirit of patriotism. Lately, they seemed absolutely destitute of commanders; or had commanders, who contentedly intrenched themselves, behind the cold dictates of cautious prudence, or the unintelligible quibbles of military law. Now, they were led by a race of heroes. Whence came this change? Did Mr. Pitt actually create a new race of men? No: but he blew the trumpet of war, with the voice of irresistible eloquence; and he displayed the consecrated standard of unconquerable abilities. He became at once, the ruling head of Britain; and the mem-

*An eloquent
trumpet!*

gewiss
bers, with one consent, implicitly submitted to his direction. Did the generals Mr. Pitt employed, exist, before he was called into power? Most true. But he led them forth, from the torpor of unnoticed obscurity, and breathed into them his own enterprising and undaunted spirit.

HE did not resemble those accomplished gentlemen who accept of employment, for the sake of the eclat, that it brings, or the emoluments, that attend it; and cannot bring themselves to submit to the drudgery of office. From his youth, he had been no stranger to severe application. Formed, by nature, to be a man of business, he was unwearied in the discharge of it; and he forgot all his personal concerns in the welfare of his country. The parade of levees he abjured. The distribution of places and pensions he resigned to his colleagues in office. His hours were devoted to the essential interests

interests of Britain. He took, in some manner, the oversight of every department of government, upon himself. His intelligence, from foreign countries, was early, authentic and universal. Possessed of the secrets of our enemies, understanding their strong and their weak sides, he accordingly formed his conclusions, and erected his projects. During his administration, the nation had confidence in government, and the spirit of the people was with it. His name alone struck terror into our enemies. Finally, in his negotiations, he never failed to support the honour of the crown, which he served, and the serene dignity of the conquests he had obtained.

SUCH then were the abilities Mr. Pitt displayed. But a more important question, relative to his administration, remains to be examined. I mean that of the advantage, or detriment, of which, in an extensive view, it may have been productive

productive, to this country ; and of its consistency, with the general interests of mankind,

AND here, we cannot help, in the first place, dropping the tear of humanity, over the most general, and widely wasting war, of which there is perhaps any example in the annals of history. What indignation does not the generous spirit feel, when he sees the cold, inanimated politician, issuing his precepts from the cabinet ; and, for the unintelligible objects of a senseless ambition, rioting in the blood of thousands, and turning out defenceless tribes, to all the variety of wretchedness ? If, in spite of a thousand other arguments, we needed any fresh proof of an after retribution, here it is presented to us, in extinguishable colours. Nothing, but inexpiable damnation, can ever repay the more than infernal spirit, I have described. The pretended reasons of war are usually

usually unintelligible and absurd. But never was war founded, in such frivolous allegations, and inexplicable claims, as that, of which I have been treating. —But in the commencement of it, we must recollect, that Mr. Pitt had no concern. And, when he came into power, it would certainly have been most difficult in itself, and impracticable, in opposition to the court, and the nation, to have effected a peace.

THE same kind of reasoning, is all we have to offer in favour of our hero, upon another head. War, in its general view, would have been carried on, if Mr. Pitt had not conducted it: therefore the blame is not eminently his. In like manner, the German war was resolved upon, without his participation. Thus far however, we must confess a blemish. But Mr. Pitt's blemishes, like the spots in the sun, serve but as foils to the lustre of his character. This certainly is an additional circumstance

stance of his glory. Obligated to engage, in a ground, not his own, and which he originally disapproved, he came off with more honour, than other men, who have had every advantage in their favour. And, in a general view, it must be considered, that the war, which was irreversibly determined on, was, in its nature destructive. Britain seemed to verge on her last hour. Though Mr. Pitt did not redeem her from this situation, and conduct her to unfailing safety; not, as it should seem, from the want of inclination, but of power: he however procrastinated her fall. He raised her, like the phoenix, from her ashes; or, like the dying swan, gave her last hour to be enchanting and divine.

POSTERITY will look back, with astonishment, and, if that were possible, with incredulity, upon the infatuated expences of this war. The supplies of the year 1761, more than trebled the supplies of
any

any year of the war of queen Anne. If the treasures had been raised, as well as expended, it might indeed pass for gallantry and spirit. But, when we reflect, that these exertions were only effected, by the creation of an enormous debt, that shall one day fall back upon us, with accumulated ruin; every feeling heart must weep, to see poison so gilded, and a nation ruined by her victories, in a way, more terrible, than old Pyrrhus ever thought on.—In the mean time, it must be acknowledged, that there are some favourable circumstances, which deserve to be taken into the account. The trade of the kingdom was so far, from being diminished, or considerably interrupted, that it was indeed much augmented, by the events of the war.

THE parliamentary history of Mr. Pitt's administration, so far as it has hitherto been published, is particularly defective.

fective. It has been alledged against him, that, with all his apparent enthusiasm for liberty, while in power, he erected no new bulwarks in her favour. I will not suppose, that this was from the want of sincerity. His engagements, as secretary of state, were exceedingly multiplied. His connections in parliament were few. And he, in a manner, regularly divided his power, with his colleagues in administration; he assuming foreign, and they retaining the disposal of domestic affairs. These considerations furnish a sort of excuse; though they must be acknowledged not to amount to a complete defence. In the second session of his ministry, a motion, for shortening the duration of parliaments, was negatived. In the mean time, a bill of some importance was passed, for ascertaining the qualification of electors; and, shortly after, another, respecting that of representatives in parliament. It was also, during his secretaryship,

taryship, that the militia bill was, first carried into a law, and afterwards improved. This measure, though narrowed, by the jealousy of the old ministers, till it became, in a manner, abortive, was certainly founded in the principles of liberty. It had been formerly introduced,, and was now patronised, by Mr. Pitt. *and is now almost entirely employed as the drill sergeant of our army*

BUT there is yet another view, in which this period may be considered, *27.000. Men* which does considerable honour to the *land volunteers* secretary. Though nothing permanent *in one year* was indeed established, in favour of freedom; yet his administration must certainly be regarded, as the temporary triumph of the people. By their voice, he was called into power. By their verdict, he was supported. He carried his measures, by the unbought suffrages of their representatives. An unanimity of this sort in parliament, was altogether unexampled.—And, when he fell, he fell,

fell, covered with popular honours : the gratitude of a mighty people followed, and illustrated him ; and their indignation, and their curse was the inheritance of his successors.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

History of the great commoner.—Administration of lord Bute.—Campaign of 1762.—Peace of Paris.—Mr. Grenville's administration.—Administration of lord Rockingham.—Affair of general warrants.—Of the stamp act.

UPON an occasion, that, at this time, presented itself, the popular disposition was manifested, in a very conspicuous manner. It has been customary, for the monarchs of this country, soon after their coronation, to dine, with the lord mayor of London, at the Guildhall. Mr. Pitt now joined in the procession. And the friends of government had the mortification, to see their young sovereign, with whatever partiality, in his favour, he ascended the throne, pass along, almost unnoticed; while the appearance

pearance of the great commoner, (such had now become his honourable stile) was hailed, with every demonstration of gratitude and joy.

BUT, however unacceptable were the changes in administration to the people at large, in the new parliament, which met, for the dispatch of business, on the third of November, the measures of government continued to be adopted, with much unanimity. Mr. Pitt perfectly maintained that manly and temperate line of conduct, which so well became the dignity of his character.—On the eleventh of December, a motion was made, for laying before parliament the papers, that related to the difference with Spain. This motion he, of course, supported. He did not wish to conceal, from the public, any part of his conduct. On the contrary, the first wish of his heart, was to submit, at once, the motives, that actuated, and the proceedings, that distinguished

tinguished it, to general examination.—
The motion was carried in the negative.

IN the mean time, every thing happened, in the negociation, at Madrid, as Mr. Pitt had foretold. Instructions were dispatched to our ambassador there, to demand a categorical answer, relative to the conclusion of the family compact. But, even before their arrival, that court had changed her stile; she passed, from conciliation, to menace and invective; and, almost explicitly, avowed the treaty in question. When the instructions were executed, the Spaniard treated it, as a step, equally haughty and inconsiderate; said, he considered it, as tantamount to a declaration of war; and acquainted the ambassador, that he might retire, when, and in what manner, was convenient to him. The pulse of the British ministry ran so low, at this time, that it is not to be doubted, that the court of Madrid, if she had been desirous of it, might have

obtained another term of three or four months, to complete her preparations.

THE most extraordinary circumstance, attending this rupture, was the tenor of a paper, given in, by the Spanish ambassador, at the court of London, and which may be filed, His catholic majesty's declaration of war, against the person of William Pitt. Nothing perhaps could be more honourable for him, than the antipathy borne him by our enemies, and the efforts they made to destroy his reputation.

ONE of the first objects of the united house of Bourbon, was the invasion of Portugal. Had an armament been previously formed against the coasts of Spain, this expedition had probably never taken place. As it was, it became necessary, to provide for the defence of our ally; and, accordingly, the sum of one million was voted by parliament, for that purpose.

A flight

A flight opposition was raised to this measure. But Mr. Pitt stood up, in its defence; and, in a strain, unaffectedly sportive and ingenuous, vindicated the general conduct of the war; and demonstrated the necessity of this step in particular.

THE campaign of 1762 was exceedingly brilliant. It was second only to that of 1759. The spirit, which Mr. Pitt had inspired, continued to operate; and the instrument he used, still vibrated, though its keys were no longer touched by that admirable master. The general outline of the campaign, and several of the particular plans, were his own. In the meantime, it would be hard, to deny some share of the merit, to his successors in office.—We preserved the frontiers of Portugal. We took Martinique, and several of the French islands in the West-Indies. After a very gallant struggle on both sides, we made ourselves masters of the Havannah. In the East, we con-

quered the island of Manilla. In the mean time, the commander in Germany, who considered himself, as neglected by our court, seemed only animated, by that circumstance, to greater exertions, and terminated the campaign with eclat.

BUT, though the operations of the war were not neglected, the most ardent wishes of administration were turned towards peace. France had experimentally found, that this was not the time, for her drawing, from her alliance, those advantages, she had hoped; and she seemed now, in good earnest, inclined to repose. Few difficulties attended its accomplishment. The conditions were such, as breathed a spirit of equity and moderation, and seemed to lay the foundation of a lasting tranquility. Had they been dictated by Britain, with the dignified forbearance of a conqueror, they might have done honour to the persons, that negotiated them. But the administration seemed

ed to confess too openly, that they were determined to have a peace, at all events; and, of consequence, France assumed that superiority in the business, which she should have been taught to suffer. The family compact was passed over without notice. France consented to evacuate her conquests upon the king of Prussia, and the Germanic powers were left to fight it out by themselves. A misunderstanding had taken place, in the beginning of the campaign, between us, and our heroic ally. That article of the annual treaty of subsidy, by which it was stipulated, that neither party should enter into a separate treaty of peace, had already been contravened by Mr. Pitt. At this time, the treaty was absolutely refused to be renewed, and the Prussian would accept of no eleemosynary assistance without it. He even professed to suspect our ministers, of carrying on an insidious correspondence with his enemies. His treaty however, with the

I 4 empress,

emprefs, prefently followed the peace of Paris, and tranquility was once more completely reftored.

It has been already obferved, that the duke of Newcaftle had concurred in the cabals againft Mr. Pitt, with the hope of recovering that power he had poffeffed in the preceding reign. It was partly owing to his intereft, that things had gone fo fmoothly in the late feflion of parliament. But his imaginary triumph was very fhort. No fooner was the bufinefs of the feflion concluded, than he was difmiffed from his feat in the treafury, and the earl of Bute openly affumed the reins of government. At the fame time, Mr. Fox became the minifter of the houfe of commons.

THEIR primary object was to obtain the approbation of the fenate for the preliminaries of peace. This meafure occafioned the firft regular divifion in parliament.

parliament. The minority however made no great figure. The misunderstanding, between the leaders of the two parties, of which it was composed, had not yet permitted them to unite in any plan of operation. In the mean time, Mr. Pitt, though he had been, for some time, confined to his bed, by a severe fit of the gout, came down to the house, and spoke for near three hours in the debate. He gave his opinion upon almost every article of the treaty; and, upon the whole, insisted, that it was inadequate to the conquests, and the just expectations of the kingdom. The temper, he had hitherto preserved, respecting the measures of government, seems clearly to evince, that this decision was not the result of an indiscriminate spirit of opposition, but the sober dictate of his judgment. How far it was founded in absolute impartiality, and how far derived from the unavoidable prejudices of his situation, is not perhaps quite so easy to decide.

IN

IN the mean time, so strenuous was his dissent upon this point, that it led him a step farther. In the commencement of his administration, he had been chosen a member for the city of Bath. That place having now sent up an address of congratulation to his majesty, Mr. Pitt declined the having any concern in presenting it. He even wrote to inform his constituents, that, having the misfortune to differ from them, in a matter of so much importance, he felt himself but ill qualified to represent them, and therefore begged leave to withdraw his pretensions upon any future occasion.

It has been a question of some magnitude in the English constitution, how far a representative is bound, by the known sense of his electors. The opinion of those, who hold that sense to be binding, in all cases whatsoever, certainly favours most of democracy, and a popular

*opinion of his constituents; - he is one of the
Council of the Nation and ought to regulate his
vote by the general welfare of the state - Electors
are only the agents for nominating the Council*

EARL OF CHATHAM. 139

pular government. At the same time, the idea of men of superior capacities, and liberal education, being chosen to deliberate, in behalf of the people, at least, upon large and complicated questions, is not surely, by any means, destitute of plausibility. There is perhaps, at first sight, something disingenuous and unmanly, in the acting against our own conviction, in subservience to any body of men, however numerous, and however venerable. At least, if this consideration have weight in any case, it certainly could not be placed in a more favourable light, than, as connected with the conduct of so illustrious a character. And, after all, this should seem to be one of those questions, of which a man may hold either side, without impeaching, either his attachment to the cause of liberty, on the one hand; or the ingenuity of his manners, on the other.

THE

THE unpopularity of the earl of Bute was now encreased to a degree, almost beyond any former example. The more Mr. Pitt had been the idol of the people; the more they detested the man, who had undermined his power, and elevated himself upon its ruins. It is difficult to please the people in a peace, who are already inebriated with victory. In the present instance, they saw, with displeasure, the lust of dominion disappointed; and they felt, with contempt, the little temporising politics, that could make a mighty kingdom truckle to a prostrate enemy. The ascendancy, they imagined the minister to have obtained over their young sovereign, rendered him, at once, the object of their terror and aversion. They feared him, as the supposed disciple of arbitrary principles; and, with a much less justifiable prejudice, they hated him, as the native of a country, whose progress they had ever contemplated with jealousy. An event, which
took

took place at this time, added fresh fuel to the fire. In the cyder act, the minister revived a part of that scheme of excise, which had rendered sir Robert Walpole so obnoxious; without, at the same time, imitating sir Robert Walpole's deference for the voice of the people. He resolutely carried through the measure, and presently after resigned his employments.

It is not easy, to understand the politics of the present reign, without a retrospect to the history of the preceding. From the revolution, the independency, and the sturdy virtue of the house of commons had been gradually decaying. In the mean time, the power, which this imperceptible change, in the English constitution, necessarily placed somewhere, fell partly into the hands of the great nobility. Their authority, when it was joined to the influence of the crown, became absolutely irresistible. It is

is not the character of an aristocracy, to use their power with moderation. Accordingly, they possessed themselves, with a kind of proscriptive spirit, of all places of honour and emolument, and, in some manner, made their sovereign a prisoner in his closet. It was presently foreseen, that, if this authority could be silently undermined, the British government would want little, except the forms, of a system of despotism. The combination of monarchy and republicanism is clearly artificial: and, I believe, we should lie open to very few exceptions, should we establish, it as a maxim; that the prince is never averse to disengage himself from the shackles of control. The period, of which I am treating, was thought particularly to favour such an attempt. The spirit of disaffection was grown out of date. The fourth in descent, and the third in succession, even the advocates of hereditary right seemed reconciled to the government of his

• EARL OF CHATHAM. 143

his present majesty. He had none of those continental prepossessions, which obliged his predecessors, to make considerable sacrifices at the shrine of their ministers. His birth, as a native of Britain, and his early youth, united all hearts in his favour, and seemed to insure a liberal construction to the measures of his government. The successes of the war gave it an additional lustre; and it seemed not easy, to shake a throne, surrounded, and made venerable, by the trophies of victory.

IN conformity to these ideas, one of the first objects of the earl of Bute, was to create a party, for the support of the dignity of the crown, and who were to be distinguished by the appellation of the king's friends. A minister, whose authority was founded in the voice of the people, and his abilities of the most imposing and formidable description, was not likely to be beheld by him, with a
very

very favourable eye. In shaking off this impediment, he was presently successful. He was not less fortunate in his second attempt. The duke of Newcastle, the head of the aristocratical party, was reduced to a private station. That party experienced the spirit of proscription in its turn; and its connexions, even to the lowest officers of government, found themselves stripped of their preferments, in a manner, that seemed to partake of inhumanity and injustice. Lord Bute saw himself at the pinnacle of his ambition. His want of popularity however, disgusted, and terrified him. He had scarcely attained his object, when he began to think of resigning it. He imagined, that the plan, he had laid down, might be carried on, with better success, under a new administration of his own appointment: and that, by their means, he might retain, as much influence, as he desired; without being subjected to the odium, of having any public concern in their measures.

THE

THE assertion of secret influence is in its very nature of difficult establishment : and, accordingly, while some have extended their suspicions, on this head, to a degree, altogether improbable ; there are others, who have remained wholly incredulous. That many negociations, respecting the great offices of government, were carried on by the earl of Bute, for several years after his resignation, is a matter, that seems, at this time, to admit of pretty satisfactory evidence. That he was the real minister during this period, and that all the measures of government were directed by him, can scarcely be imagined. His very dissatisfaction with the succeeding administrations, abundantly proves, that they frequently asserted their independency. A certain degree of power, of which perhaps himself had no very precise idea, he wished to retain. It must always be remembered, that fickleness and instability seem to have formed a leading trait of his

his character. In this chaos of politics, much must necessarily, for the present remain unintelligible: perhaps the pen of distant historians will scarcely be able to develop the obscurity.

THE person, he placed at the head of affairs, and whom he probably imagined well qualified, to answer his purposes, was Mr. George Grenville. Though nobly born, his ambition had separated him from his family connections, and, at this time, he stood almost alone. He was possessed of a sound understanding; and his industry, in the fulfilling every public engagement, was altogether unwearied. His assiduous attention however to little objects, seemed to have narrowed his mind; and, though perfectly equal to the business of office, so long as it continued in a regular train, he was not formed, to grapple with arduous situations, or to tread unbeaten paths.

IN

IN the mean time, it was not long, before he discovered a firmness and inflexibility of spirit, that were, by no means, agreeable to his political creator. The presidency of council had been for some time vacant, and one of the secretaries of state now died. This situation seemed to afford a favourable opening for a new change of ministry. Lord Bute is said, upon former occasions, more than once, to have suggested to Mr. Pitt, and other leaders in opposition, the practicability of their return into office. A negotiation was now certainly commenced, and even carried so far, as for the great commoner, to have had repeated conferences, respecting it, with his majesty. The favourite had either the temerity, to imagine, that he could render this immortal hero, the appendage of his system ; or the dissingenuity, to design the deluding and disgracing a character, to the general veneration of which he principally ascribed the unpopularity of his

own. The terms however, that were held out, were finally rejected as inadmissible; and the old ministry were permitted to retain their preferments, and to strengthen themselves with the accession of the duke of Bedford.

ALTHOUGH these treaties were, for the present, abortive, they had however one very considerable and conspicuous effect. They fixed the longing eyes of all men upon the great offices under government. They rendered the efforts of opposition in parliament, irregular, temporising and timid. Every man feared, by some rash step, to close upon himself the half-open door of promotion. Even the proud spirit of Mr. Pitt was infected with the general contagion.—His brilliant services, and his unrivalled abilities had now placed him on high. He had begun to decline in the vale of years; and his increasing infirmities gave an additional venerableness to his character. When he
came

came down to the house of commons, it was usually, wrapped in flannels, and supported upon a crutch. Every eye turned its ardent gaze upon his visage; and every ear hung upon the truths, that flowed from his tongue, as upon the dictates of a superior intelligence. It seemed, as if the genius of Britain descended, to point out the path of tranquility and happiness.—Had he known, perfectly, to have preserved the dignity of his character; had he looked down with superiority, upon the little traffic of places and power; had he reserved himself, to snatch his country from the tremendous ruin, that he lived to see falling upon her head: how splendid and how beautiful had been this department of his history! —But, among all the malignant effects of that clandestine influence, we have attempted to describe, this was not the least; that it was able, to degrade the character of the illustrious commoner; that it took hold of him by his ambition,

the only part, that heaven had left vulnerable about him; and introduced a feebleness and versatility into his story, that must ever form the principal blemish of this immortal patriot,

THE first business of the new session of parliament, and that, which principally fixed the public attention, was the affair of Mr. Wilkes. He had figured among the vindicators of Mr. Pitt, at the time, when his character was most outrageously attacked. Of all his contemporary writers in that stile, he seemed principally to have gained the general ear; and the late minister had, in some measure, fallen a sacrifice, to the popularity of the North Briton. In one of those papers, he had animadverted upon a speech from the throne, and, under pretence of considering it, as the speech of the minister, had boldly charged it with asserting a falsehood. This circumstance was eagerly laid hold of by his enemies. A general

neral warrant was issued against him; his papers were seized; himself taken into custody, and treated, in all respects, with particular severity. They had to do however with a person of a high and unconquerable spirit. He presently obtained his liberty; his party was eagerly embraced by the populace; and he seemed ready to engage, upon almost an equal footing, with the most formidable adversaries.

UPON the meeting of parliament, the scene was entirely altered. The paper in question was immediately voted a libel, and ordered to be burned by the common hangman. The privilege, in consideration of which he had been enlarged by chief justice Pratt, afterwards lord Camden, was declared a nullity. A day was fixed, for the hearing of evidence, in proof of his being the author. In the mean time, the Essay on Woman, which had been stolen from him, in a

manner, that reflects little honour upon the perpetrators, was produced, and a new charge, founded upon it, exhibited against him, in the house of lords. All his friends deserted him. Mr. Pitt joined in the cry, and exclaimed upon him, as “the blasphemer of his God, and the “reviler of his king.” Alarmed at the criticalness of his situation, he determined to go into voluntary exile. Soon after this, he was expelled the house of commons; found guilty upon two several indictments, in regard to the obnoxious performances, and declared an outlaw. Thus seemed to have been completed the ruin of a man, so lately the favourite of his acquaintance, and the idol of the people; whose wit, spirit and good humour, if he had not been carried to unwarrantable excess, might have insured to him the possession of tranquil enjoyment and general esteem.

THE most important question, relative to this business, and the only one, upon which

which opposition properly mustered themselves, was that of the legality of general warrants. It was here, that Mr. Pitt exerted himself with uncommon energy. By such warrants, it was asserted, the most innocent person might be dragged from his bed, and committed to prison. All his secrets might be exposed; all his papers turned into evidence against himself. Any previous charge were no longer necessary. The displeasure of a corrupt minister, the wantonness of an inferior miscreant, may subject him to every outrage. How shall this be reconciled with the British constitution? "It is," said the great commoner, "a maxim of our law, that
" every Englishman's house is his castle.
" Not that it is surrounded with walls
" and battlements. It may be a straw-
" built shed. Every wind of heaven
" may whistle round it. All the ele-
" ments of nature may enter in. But
" the king cannot; the king dare not."—

In spite however of all that could be urged, the question was carried against him. But the minority, upon this occasion was so considerable, that government may rather be said, to have escaped, than to have obtained the victory.

ANOTHER measure of this administration, which, though it did not attract equal attention at the time, will principally serve to fix its character with posterity, was the new mode of conduct they adopted, with respect to British America. They planted the severest restraints, upon the trade she carried on with the colonies of France and Spain, which, though in the letter of the law contraband, was however, in the highest degree, advantageous, both to herself, and the mother country. They prohibited the use of paper currency. They imposed new duties upon her exports and imports. And, to fill up the measure of their proceedings against her, in
the

the following session, they passed the celebrated stamp-act. During the time, in which this matter was agitated, and indeed through the whole session, Mr. Pitt was absent from the house of commons.

THIS is asserted upon the credit of a book, of considerable party authority, intitled the history of minority, from 1762 to 1765. (Ch. 21. p. 309.) In the mean time, it may be proper to observe, that the celebrated writer of Junius's letters, expressly affirms, that Mr. Pitt and lord Camden, as members of opposition, declared themselves in favour of America, during the administration of Mr. Grenville. Several circumstances concur, to induce me to reject this testimony. Mr. Burke, in the celebrated speech, in which he deduces the history of the American proceedings, asserts, that no measure, of equal importance, ever encountered a more languid opposition, than the stamp-act. (See also Almon's debates of the
house

house of commons. Vol. 7. p. 20.) Thanks were voted in America to general Conway and Mr. Barrè, as it's most strenuous opposers. (Annual Register. Vol. 8. p. 51.) And it deserves our notice, that lord Camden was not created a peer, till some months after. As chief justice of the common pleas, he had indeed a seat, upon the wool-sack, in the house of lords; but the judges not being consulted, he certainly delivered no opinion upon the subject. I have inserted this remark, that, when I am found contradicting authorities, that may be apprehended respectable, I may not be hastily concluded, to have done it, out of ignorance, and not for reasons, with which I have not always thought proper to trouble my reader.

ABOUT this time, died sir William Pynsent, a person of considerable property, and who had long been an admirer of the great commoner; and bequeathed to him the bulk of his estate. By this means,
he

he is said, from a slenderness of circumstances, to have been raised at once, into a considerable fulness of fortune. Such examples are among the loudest demonstrations of public spirit, and the strongest incitements of masculine virtue.

THE misunderstanding between lord Bute and the ministry had never been perfectly healed. Fresh subjects of jealousy were started. A communication was again opened with Mr. Pitt, and his grand coadjutor, lord Temple. In order to give it additional weight, the duke of Cumberland, uncle to his majesty, was employed, as the negociator. The terms were not very different from those, which had been offered in a former instance. The earl of Northumberland, an intimate friend of the favourite, was first proposed to preside at the treasury board; and afterwards mentioned for lord chamberlain. With this latter plan, Mr. Pitt is said not to have been unwilling

ling to have closed, but to have declared a resolution, not to come in, unless he could have earl Temple, as his colleague. That nobleman, with some asperity of language, rejected any idea of a compromise, and insisted upon banishing, from all offices of trust and confidence, every person, who was in habits of intercourse with lord Bute. Thus the negociation was again frustrated, and the ministry in possession became triumphant.

UPON this occasion was exhibited an extraordinary scene. Confiding in their imaginary strength, the existing ministers displaced, at one blow, lord Northumberland, lord Holland, late Mr. Fox, and Mr. Stuart Mackenzie, brother to the favourite. Party writers even went so far as to report, that the duke of Bedford, who was now considered as their leader, was carried to the excess of disrespect and outrage to the person of his sovereign. "After robbing him of the
" rights

“rights of a king, he would not permit
 “him to preserve the honour of a gen-
 “tleman.”

MATTERS were now so far advanced, as to shut out all prospect of conciliation. As the last resource, application was made to the marquis of Rockingham, and the duke of Newcastle. They were permitted to name their own terms; and the result was an entire change of administration. So high however was the public opinion of Mr. Pitt and his friends, that the new ministers, did not set out with any great degree of popularity; and they were even glanced at, in terms of disapprobation, by the city of London, in an address they presented to the king, upon the birth of a prince. They distinguished themselves, by the appellation of old whigs, and were the professed successors of the Walpoles and the Pelhams. No great expectations were therefore formed from them, by the enthusiastic friends of liberty.

THEY

THEY presently however redeemed their character. The leaven of the old ruling party seemed entirely purged away, by the personal qualities of their present leader. He was “mild, but determined.” Without possessing the elevations of genius, his views of every subject were illuminated with the rays of virtue, and ascertained with the manliness of truth. When all about him was uproar and confusion, when heaven from above threatened, and earth trembled under his feet, he was perfectly serene and collected. Estranged to the violence of the passions, his measures were dictated by the purest benevolence.—And to crown all her gifts, heaven blessed him with a friend, in the highest degree, worthy of him. Exuberance of genius, and all the charms of eloquence were his least praise. Spotless integrity, disinterested virtue, laborious patriotism; these qualities shall hold him up to the veneration of posterity, when his foes are forgotten in contempt, or immortalised to infamy.

THE

THE first measures of the new administration respected America. That country was inflamed almost to the degree of insurrection. Lord Rockingham passed a law, declaratory of the parliamentary supremacy of this country, in all cases whatsoever; and totally repealed the stamp act. The former he did, in opposition to Mr. Pitt; and the latter, against the inclination of the party, that had brought him into power. His conduct was, of course, much criticised. In declaring our right to tax America, he must be allowed, to have contravened the plainest principles of liberty. He furnished a plausible pretext to the party, that came after him, and who were determined to give an efficiency to the position, which he certainly never intended. In the mean time, that his conduct was founded in principle, cannot reasonably be doubted. The opposition, that he encountered, on the one side, and on the other, plainly evinces it. The supremacy

L

macy of this country was, at that time, a favourite article with all parties. And he apprehended, surely not without some appearance of reason, that this could never be maintained, without reviving a power of compelling them, in the last resort, to furnish their quota for the support of government.

A PASSAGE from one of Mr. Pitt's speeches upon this subject, as relating to a question of the utmost importance in the British constitution, I will beg leave to insert. "There is," said he, "an idea in some, that the colonies are virtually represented in this house. I would fain know, by whom an American is represented here. Is he represented by any knight of the shire, in any county in this kingdom? Would to God, that respectable representation were augmented to a greater number! Or will you tell me, that he is represented by any representative

*The dangerous precedent of Tax being a like in Britain
to lay taxes— on the taxes and taxes— but with
respect to America it would be quite otherwise
The British taxes would be exempt in the
same degree that the American taxes would
EARL OF CHATHAM. 163rd be burdened*

“tentative of a borough;—a borough,
“which perhaps no man ever saw? This
“is what is called, the rotten part of
“the constitution. It cannot last the
“century. If it do not drop off, it must
“be amputated. The idea of a virtual
“representation of America in this
“house, is the most contemptible idea,
“that ever entered into the head of a
“man. It does not deserve a serious
“refutation.”

In the mean time, the attention of
ministry was, by no means confined to
this great object. They established fe-
veral new and important regulations, in
the commercial system of the colonies.
They repealed the excise upon cyder.
They declared general warrants, and
the seizure of papers illegal. They
concluded a commercial treaty with
the empress of Russia. And, in the
last place, they settled, to the satisfac-
tion of the owners, the long-contested

affair of the Canada bills; and made some progress, in adjusting the dispute, about the ransom of Manilla: two points, in which the late treaty of peace had never been properly executed.

THE doing all this, in the very midst of danger, and in the hourly expectation of an expulsion from their offices, certainly merits the highest commendation. But the era of their power was now past. It only remained for them, to fix their reputation on the most permanent basis. They quitted their places with a disinterestedness, which, it is to be feared, will be more the object of admiration, than of example. They secured neither place, pension, or reversion to themselves, or any of their adherents.

CHAP

C H A P. VI.

Mr. Pitt becomes lord privy seal, and earl of Chatham.—His coadjutors in administration.—Measures of government.—Lord Chatham withdraws from public business.—System of American taxation renewed.—Middlesex election.—Earls of Shelburne and Chatham resign.—Subsequent transactions.

THE generous mind would wish to draw a veil over the scene, which followed. We have beheld Mr. Pitt, at the head of the most strenuous and most successful administration, this country ever knew. We are now to behold an administration formed under his auspices, the feeblest, the most disunited, I had almost said, the most pernicious, that the present reign, fruitful in such administrations,

strations, has exhibited. In treating of it however, let us endeavour, to distinguish the blamable, from that, which is simply unfortunate in the story of our hero; and to draw the line, between what an undistinguishing vulgar may stigmatise, and what cool and disinterested philosophy must condemn.

ONE of the first unfavourable circumstances, attending its formation, was its displacing a connection of men, virtuous in their intrinsic character, who had been gradually advancing in the public esteem. The jealousy between these two parties, has perhaps been one of the principal misfortunes of the reign. Could they have firmly united, and forgotten all their petty differences, for the sake of the public good; they might probably have formed an immoveable barrier against that secret influence, of which each of them has complained in his turn; and an invincible phalanx, in the cause of
public

public liberty, and the vindication of national honour.

THE plan too, upon which the new administration was formed, was, to say the least of it, a very hazardous one. The precarious and infirm health of Mr. Pitt rendered it impracticable for him, to engage in any of the great responsible offices, or regularly to superintend the helm of government. In a word, he had no other alternative, but that of composing an administration of such persons, as he could best trust; and delegating his credit to colleagues, who should studiously fill up his plans, and, from conviction, pursue his measures. To give efficiency to a system of this sort, implicit confidence, and unlimited friendship were necessary.

IN the mean time, it must not be concealed, that Mr. Pitt, with all his abilities, and all his virtues, was not of a temper,

the best adapted to the milder ties of friendship. His unbounded ambition could not admit of a perfect participation of interests; and the imposing superiority of his talents was calculated to keep lesser minds at an awful distance. Something of this sort will probably be thought visible, in the misunderstanding, that now broke out, between him, and his noble brother in law, earl Temple.

THEY had long preserved the most perfect harmony upon every political question, and the great commoner had warmly declared in parliament, that he would “live and die with his noble brother.” But,—such is the mutability of all human things!—these illustrious persons could not now agree, in the very outset of the business; and seem to have displayed that harsh and unaccommodating humour, that would have been ungraceful in perfect strangers. As lord Temple was designed, to hold the first
ostensible

ostensible place in government, and Mr. Pitt meant what had usually been considered, as an irresponsible office, for himself; that nobleman, it seems, expected to have been treated upon an equality; and conceived, that he might claim a regular share, in nominating the whole administration. The ideas too, which these two great men had formed of the plan, upon which their ministry should be adjusted, appear to have been different. Lord Temple was for such a coalition of parties, as, he apprehended, would best conduce to give solidity to the system, and form the most effectual barrier against any extrinsic influence. Accordingly he proposed one noble lord, out of their own connexion; and another, earl Gower, who adhered to an opposite party, for two of the most considerable places. Mr. Pitt answered, that those places were already engaged; and, upon this, his lordship immediately broke off the conference.

THUS

THUS far we perceive nothing, that pointedly interferes with any general principles of government, or strongly impeaches the character of either of the persons in question. We have only to lament, that they discovered this uncomplying temper, at a time, when their union was most desirable ; and that Mr. Pitt was deprived, by the means of it, of one of the most valuable securities he could have had, for the uniform pursuit of his measures.—What followed is not equally indifferent.

Not satisfied with the sinister consequences, inseparable from their discord, they proceeded to the disreputable length of a paper war. Mr. Pitt was first attacked in a pamphlet, which is said, by lord Chesterfield, to have been written by the earl himself; and of which a more proper character cannot be given, than that, which he has subjoined to this information; that it is “very scurrilous and
“scandalous

“scandalous, and betrays private conversation.” The answer was written, not by Mr. Pitt himself, but probably by one of his friends, and under his sanction. The character of earl Temple however, lord Chesterfield conjectures, from the manner, in which it is expressed, to have been Mr. Pitt’s own. As excellent satire is seldom wholly unfounded, and as it may serve, at the same time, to illustrate the disposition of our hero, it may not be unworthy of insertion.

“ Lord Temple, though he has possessed some very considerable offices in the government, has never been remarkable for any astonishing share of abilities; and, till his resignation with Mr. Pitt, on the accession of his present majesty, he was looked upon, merely, as a good-natured, inoffensive nobleman, who had a very fine seat, and was always ready to indulge any body, with a walk in his garden, or look at his

“ his furniture. How he has suddenly
“ commenced such a statesman, as to be
“ put in competition with Mr. Pitt, is
“ not easy to determine: but so far is
“ clear, that, had he not fastened himself
“ into Mr. Pitt’s train, and acquired, by his
“ affinity, such an interest in the history
“ of that great man; he might have
“ crept out of life, with as little notice,
“ as he crept in, and gone off with no
“ other degree of credit, than that of
“ adding a single unit to the bills of
“ mortality.”

THE noble earl being now out of the question, the duke of Grafton was appointed first lord of the treasury; and, at the same time, Mr. Charles Townshend, was constituted the minister of the house of commons. Both of them were remarkable, for the versatility of their political conduct. Their characters however were not entirely similar.—The duke had originally formed himself, under the auspices
of

of Mr. Pitt. He afterwards joined the Rockingham administration. When it began to be pretty generally perceived, that their power was drawing to a close, and it was in contemplation to apply to the great commoner; the duke of Grafton resigned, declaring, that he thought that administration too weak, to do any essential service; but that, under his illustrious patron, he would be content, “to accept the most insignificant office, and “to wield a spade, or a mattock.”—He is represented, by a very penetrating writer, as having been “sullen and severe, without probity;” as having been “unprincipled and dissipated, without gaiety.” In him were supposed to have been blended, whatever is most odious, with whatever is most contemptible. With parts, plausible enough, to disgrace and betray the first and wisest head in Britain; he had not penetration enough, to hinder him from being the tool of men, who were happy to meet
with

with a person, that seemed ready to pursue any plan, however unprecedented; and to adopt any measure, however absurd.

IN Mr. Townshend, on the contrary, fickleness and levity were so shaded, under a thousand beautiful accomplishments, that they seemed, to stand up, and claim their pardon. He possessed the most brilliant wit, and the most lucid eloquence. He was the delight and ornament of the senate; and the charm of every private society, that he graced with his presence. In a word, he was capable of becoming the first character of his age, had there been any connexion of men, by whom he could have been trusted.—Such were the persons, to whom, in some manner, the whole success of a system, upon the event of which the very existence of this country possibly depended, was committed.

LORD

LORD CAMDEN, the firmest patriot, and the truest friend, was made chancellor. The two secretaries were the earl of Shelburne, and general Conway. The former, though he had once opposed our hero with peculiar acrimony, was now his most professed admirer and pupil. The latter was one of those persons, who retained their appointments, upon the dismissal of lord Rockingham. Mr. Pitt himself accepted the office of lord privy seal. As this post had been constantly annexed to a peerage, he was, at the same time, created earl of Chatham.

SHOULD it be the fate of this essay, to survive the period, in which it was immediately written, it is to be feared that some of the reflections it contains, will become scarcely intelligible. If our hero were fortunate, in an unexampled degree of popularity and reputation; he, at least experienced the fate of all shining characters, to have his actions sub-
jected

jected to the harshest constructions, and his faults exaggerated with laborious asperity. Nothing could be more natural, or more reasonable, than his acceptance of a peerage, in the circumstances I have described. Few, one would have imagined, would have envied him the repose, that his infirmities required; or the dignity, he had earned, by the unremitted patriotism of a whole life of services. And yet this promotion involved him in the bitterest obloquy.

It happened, as, without any great hazard of disappointment, might have been readily predicted. Scarcely was the administration adjusted, ere it was disunited. Mr. Townshend was not formed to be the deputy of any man. His conscious abilities forbade it; and the versatility of his disposition rendered it impracticable. In the mean time, it is not improbable, the secret influence, we have so repeatedly mentioned, was not without

without its share, in this inauspicious event ; and that the division was fomented by the most dishonourable artifices. Taking it for granted, for a moment, that such an influence existed, all that would be necessary, would be an ostensible administration ; which, the more it was divided in itself, the more easy it would be to defeat, in any of their deviations, from that unseen line, that was marked out for them. In that case, it might possibly be the height of their ambition, to outwit the abilities, and fix a blot upon the name of the most illustrious statesman, that ever existed.

SHORT was the date of the ministry of Lord Chatham. There are but two measures, that can properly be ascribed to it. One of them was certainly defective in the designing ; and neither were productive of any benefit to his country. The former related to the state of the kingdom with regard to corn. The har-

M

vest

vest of 1766 had proved so unfavourable, that the nation was threatened with a famine. In this exigency, the ministry issued a proclamation of embargo, though corn was yet at a price, at which it might legally be exported. Thus far they did perhaps what was necessary; and their proceedings might be justified by the maxim, that the preservation of the people is superior to every other consideration. But they ought to have had the wisdom and magnanimity, immediately to have proposed an act of indemnity, of the most general nature. Instead of which, they brought in a bill, that comprehended only the inferior ministers of the executive power; and, when an amendment was offered, that should extend its operation to themselves, they vigorously opposed it. In a word, the public had the astonishment, to see the lords Chatham and Camden, whom they had ever considered, as the grand supporters of liberty and the constitution, pleading

pleading for that most dangerous of all prerogatives, a power of dispensing with the laws of the land.

THE second measure of this administration, was the appointment of a committee, to enquire into the state of the East-India company. Lord Chatham certainly felt, with the deepest regret, the immense load of debt, under which his country appeared ready to sink. We had already miscarried in an attempt, to discharge part of our burden upon the shoulders of America. The apparent prosperity of our affairs in the East, at that time, attracted very general attention; and it was natural to think of turning so extraordinary successes, to the public advantage: But, before the committee had come to any resolutions, lord Chatham was attacked with that long and dangerous illness, which necessarily sequestered him from public business, and finally deprived the nation of his further

M 2

services.

services. What his plan was, it is difficult now, with any certainty, to determine. By many, at that time, it was supposed, that he intended entirely to deprive the company of their acquisitions, and finally to vest them in the crown.

THE administration had originally been composed of such, as had immediately enlisted themselves under the banners of Mr. Pitt; in conjunction with several persons, who were contented to retain their preferments, upon the dismissal of lord Rockingham. It was only advanced thus far in its progress, when it received a severe shock, from the resignation of the greater part of those, who came under the latter description. Upon this emergency, lord Chesterfield asserts, that the earl of Chatham made proposals to the duke of Bedford. Certain it is however, that no coalition of this kind took place; and the men, who were now introduced into office, were principally composed

EARL OF CHATHAM. 181

composed of the personal friends of lord Bute.

It was, by this time, sufficiently obvious, that lord Chatham's arrangement must finally prove abortive. The changes, that had now taken place, seemed to prove, that the secret influence, so often complained of, continued to exist. The breach between Mr. Townshend, and his political creator, instead of being healed, grew wider and wider. And it is probable, that the noble lord began, by this time, to experience that coolness and desertion in his treasurer, which he is said afterwards to have stated, as one of the causes of his miscarriage. To complete the whole, his constitutional distemper was risen to a height, that rendered him absolutely incapable of public business. It is probable, that the unfavourable appearances, I have described, sat strongly upon his mind, and, concurring with his disorder, precipitated him into that state

of imbecility, of which he now became the victim.

SUCH is the history of lord Chatham's second administration. Humanity drops a tear upon it; and the generous spirit, warmed, even to enthusiasm, by the contemplation of his former services, would wish to blot it from the records of time.—But it does not end here. In its commencement, it displaced an administration, as virtuous, as disinterested, as ever sat at the helm of government. Britain seemed to derive new vigour from their fostering hand. Her wounds, which erewhile appeared all livid and ghastly, seemed fast converging to a perfect recovery.—And what kind of an administration did lord Chatham leave in the possession of government? An administration, unprincipled and disunited, made up of the deserters of all parties. An administration, to whose errors, their full effect was carefully preserved; and whose

EARL OF CHATHAM. 183

whose virtues, all thinly sown, as they were, by an unseen, malignant influence, were blasted in the bud. In a word, an administration, which, with a slight reinforcement, retained their posts fourteen years, and reduced their country to the lowest abyss of poverty, contempt and dishonour.

ONE of the first acts, that followed lord Chatham's demission of the government, was an act, for granting certain duties in the American colonies. This is certainly one of the most extraordinary events, that history records. Three principal members of the cabinet, with the first lord of the treasury at their head, afterwards declared, that it had never received their approbation. While the baleful effects of the stamp act were yet fresh in the memory of every man; the same measure was renewed, with circumstances of additional irritation. While every thing was carried on, with great

parade, in the name of lord Chatham; this was the period they chose for their operations. Lord Chatham, who had distinguished himself, by being the first public man in this country, to declare the exclusive right of America, to grant her own money. Lord Chatham, to whom the gratitude of America had raised statues, and erected monuments; and whose name had been repeated, from one end of the continent to the other, as the symbol of liberty.

MR. TOWNSHEND was the official author of this measure. The constant object of his pursuit was applause. When the voice of this country seemed to call for a revenue from America, he had been an advocate for the stamp act. In the following session, when events had changed the popular opinion, he voted for its repeal. The fall of the Rockingham administration naturally brought their favourite measure into disrepute. To conform
therefore

therefore to the temper, which began to prevail, Mr. Townshend declared, very early in the session, that a revenue must be had out of America. He was instantly tied down to his engagements. And, that he might fulfil them in the most plausible manner, he introduced his bill, with a preamble, declaring the necessity of a revenue, to make it palatable to the high-fliers at home; and he adopted the American distinction, of restricting himself to external imposition. But the measure had the usual fate of all exquisite policy.

Its author had, by this time, probably begun to flatter himself with the idea, that he was, in reality, the first minister of his country. But the men, he had to deal with, seemed perfectly to understand the art of degrading patriotism, and mortifying arrogance. To convince him of his dependency, he found himself, towards the close of the session, in a question,

tion, relative to the business of the East-Indian committee, together with Mr. secretary Conway, in a very inconsiderable minority.

Soon after the session was concluded, Mr. Townshend died; the secretary resigned; and the remaining members of administration formed that coalition with the Bedford party, which, unlike all the former political manœuvres of the reign, proved so durable. What principally attracted the public attention, in the next, and last session of this parliament, was an attempt, made by administration, to deprive the duke of Portland of an estate, that had continued in his family for seventy years, by virtue of a grant of king William the third. The attempt itself was scarcely more odious, than the unfair and precipitate methods, that were taken to accomplish it.

THE

THE ministry was, by this time, become so unpopular, that the ensuing elections were very generally and warmly contested, throughout the kingdom. But the person, who made himself principally noticed on this occasion, was the celebrated Mr. Wilkes. While the methods, employed in his prosecution, were declared illegal by the Rockingham administration, he himself was, in a great measure, forgotten. Upon the ensuing change, when the duke of Grafton, who had always professed the strongest attachment for him, was placed at the head of the treasury, his hopes revived. He applied, with confidence, to that nobleman, to solicit his pardon. Finding himself here treated with neglect, if not with insult, he became desperate. The despair of a man of his intrepid spirit, is always formidable. He took the resolution to come over to England ; and offered himself a candidate, to represent, first the city of London, and afterwards
the

the county of Middlesex. In this latter attempt, he was successful. The nation saw, with astonishment, an obscure individual, with courage enough to engage in so arduous an undertaking, though in continual fear of his creditors, and with the terrors of an outlawry hanging over his head : and the administration of a mighty kingdom, so dastardly and pusillanimous, as not to venture to take him into custody, when they might have done it, almost without animadversion ; but suffering him to go such a length, as, in the event, to be able to defy their utmost efforts. When, at last, he was apprehended, the populace declared themselves strongly in his favour. In the mean time, the ministry encreased the general resentment, by appearing studiously forward, to call in the assistance of the military ; and afterwards by screening, with a thousand arts, the ministers of their vengeance, from the hands of justice, in cases, in which they had gone beyond
beyond

beyond, what even military rules could authorise.

LORD Chatham had long ceased, to have any concern in public affairs. Partly upon account of his health, and partly from the disgust and mortification he conceived from the conduct of ministers, the business of his office had, for a considerable time, been transacted by commission. At this time, there happened an event, which, in some measure, roused him from his torpor, and determined him finally to withdraw his name from an administration, with which he had long ceased to have any connexion.

THE brave Corsicans had long struggled against the tyranny of the Genoese. Tired of an unprofitable and disputed dominion, that republic had lately made over her claim to the crown of France. But, though, in consequence of this cession, their new masters poured upon them

them an immense military force ; yet, by the independent, unsubmitting spirit, that had long animated them, they were induced, to hold out to the last, and defend themselves to their rocks and fastnesses. They hoped, that some friendly power would, at length, be roused to their relief ; and were persuaded, that it was better to die in the cause of freedom, than to submit, and be slaves. Such a determination naturally commanded the sympathy of Britain. Separately too from this consideration, the island, from its site in the Mediterranean, was generally esteemed of considerable importance in the commercial world. Quietly to permit it therefore, to be thrown into the scale of a power, whose superior strength had long rendered her formidable in the eyes of Europe, was certainly contrary to the politics, by which that quarter of the globe had been actuated, for more than a century past. Most persons imagined, that a strong remonstrance

remonstrance, from our court, would have deterred France from her undertaking, without the risk of a war.

IN this however, they seem to have been mistaken. Such a remonstrance was actually transmitted to our ambassador by the earl of Shelburne, and by him delivered to the court of Versailles. From the opinion they formed of the imbecility of our government, it was treated with contempt. The conclusion was simply this. The ambassador insisted upon a recal, and, at the same time, lord Shelburne was dismissed from his office. The intimacy, that now subsisted between this nobleman and lord Chatham, induced the aged leader, to display, at once, his resentment of the affront, offered to his friend, and his sense of the national disgrace, by an immediate resignation.

It will probably be asked, how lord Chatham, who, in the beginning of the
reign

reign, had declared, that he would never make himself responsible for measures, which he was not allowed to guide, came now to defer this step to so late a period? I will not assert, that his conduct, upon this head, was entirely blameless. In the mean time, much might be said, in his excuse, with regard to the distemper, under which he laboured; which, especially in the former part of this period, had debilitated his faculties, and rendered him incapable of public business, to the degree, that, for a considerable time, he did not open a single packet, that was sent to him, of a public concern. Much also might be said, respecting the desertion of his friends. The last lesson of a generous, untainted heart, is that of suspicion. This is one part of the apology, he is said afterwards to have offered in his own behalf. At the same time, he complained of a circumstance, which could only be ascertained by repeated experience, that the

the open treachery, that was practised against him, was abetted by secret influence; and that he found "a power behind the throne, greater, than the throne itself."

In the mean time, the discontents in America, and particularly in the capital of Boston, had risen to a very formidable height. Several regiments of soldiers however were ordered upon that station, and a temporary tranquility reestablished. In the first session of the new parliament, these affairs formed a principal object of their attention. They voted several very strong censures of the Bostonians, and addressed his majesty, to cause the delinquents there, to be brought over to this country for trial. These seemingly resolute measures were, in the mean time, accompanied to America, with a circular letter of the secretary of state, promising a repeal of the greater part of the obnoxious duties, and assuring,

N

that

that the idea, of deriving a parliamentary revenue from that country, was entirely abandoned.

Nothing can be more truly deplorable, than to behold the possession, of the most valuable jewel of the British crown thus egregiously trifled with. By a partial repeal, we displayed a spiritless temper of insidious concession: at the same time, that the tax we retained, not being sufficient, to pay the charge of collection, demonstrated, that we retained it, for the sake of asserting our imaginary rights; and gave the lie to our most solemn declarations. The minister's engaging the honour of the sovereign, for an act hereafter to take place in parliament, was also considered, as not a little extraordinary. In a word, there appeared nothing manly, decisive and ingenuous in the whole transaction. "If we contend for a revenue," such was the language of opposition, when
the

the affair came afterwards to be canvassed,
 “ let us establish a revenue, that shall
 “ be worth contending for. But if,
 “ with maturer wisdom, and juster prin-
 “ ciples, we mean concession; let us
 “ come forward, like men, and confess
 “ our error. Let our acknowledge-
 “ ment of the rights of others, be as
 “ honest and undisguised, as we would
 “ wish, upon a proper occasion, to be
 “ the assertion of our own.”

IN the mean time, the most extraor-
 dinary domestic occurrences of the pre-
 sent reign had taken place, in the affair
 of the Middlesex election. Mr. Wilkes
 was expelled the house of commons; re-
 elected by his constituents; and, in re-
 turn, declared incapable of sitting in the
 present parliament. As the county was
 not to be diverted to another choice, the
 ministry offered the seat to any one, who
 would propose himself as a candidate,
 though he should have but four voices.

Upon this principle, Mr. Luttrell was afterwards declared, by the house of commons, the legal member. Never did any determination spread a more universal flame of discontent. The city of London led the way, and many of the most considerable counties in the kingdom, imitated them, in petitioning the sovereign for the dissolution of parliament.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

Lord Chatham takes the lead of opposition.

—Appointment of lord North.—Falkland's islands.—Imprisonment of the lord mayor.—Incroachments upon the East India company.—Riot at Boston.—Penal acts of parliament.

WE are now brought to the last era of the life of lord Chatham. From henceforth, his conduct is unaccommodating and uniform. The figure however, which he makes, at this time, is different from that, in which we have hitherto seen him. From his resignation in 1761, he seemed, in some manner, to fill the eye of the public. Every man, not enlisted in a party, seemed to look up to his principles, as the standard of liberty; and to his conduct, as the

model of public spirit. A thousand lesser deviations were forgiven him, or indeed seemed to pass unobserved, amid the splendour of his virtues. But the fatal era of his administration, sunk him in the public esteem. It was inglorious: and the generality judge rather by events, than by actions; and are not curious in discriminating the unfortunate, and the blamable. A considerable part of the blame they placed, where, I believe, posterity will not be forward to place it, in the acceptance of a peerage. The removal however, from the house of commons, that attended it, contributed to shut the door, against his recovering that boundless popularity, which he had formerly enjoyed.

DISAPPOINTED in the inauspicious event of the administration, which he had formed with so assiduous care; and mortified, at the impolitic proceedings, of which he had been, however undesignedly,

edly, in some measure, the occasion, he had, for some time, hid his head in the obscurity of retreat. But even there, the voice of the people reached him. He was roused from supineness and slumber. He came forward, to face his own treacherous friends, together with those new associates, whose principles, he had ever considered, as inimical to liberty. He even seemed, to have risen from the grave, that erewhile had half closed upon his head; and to have caught, once more, all the vigour and animation of unworn youth. He shook off all his long infirmities. He managed not his declining years. With ambitious eagerness, he presented himself upon every occasion; and, where the artillery of opposition had made an impression, upon the defences of the cabal, he was ever foremost to mount the breach. Together with him, he brought a small, but chosen phalanx. The blunt, the honest and artless earl Temple. The accomplished, the elabo-

rate lord Shelburne. And lastly, his excellent friend, the lord chancellor, sagacious and penetrating, unmoved by wiles, unawed by power.

WITH this addition to the strength of minority in the house of lords, that party appeared, every way, so respectable, as to divert the attention of the people, almost entirely, from the proceedings of their representatives; upon whom it had usually been fixed; but who had, in a great measure, alienated their affections, by their conduct in the affair of Mr. Wilkes. The session commenced, with a motion, for an amendment to the address, by lord Chatham, promising, with all convenient speed, to take into consideration the causes of the public discontent, and particularly the affair, from which they were supposed, to have originated. This amendment was supported, with much energy and decision, by lord Camden. The consequence was his
immediate

immediate dismissal from office. The seals were offered to Mr. Charles Yorke, who is said to have accepted them with reluctance, through the personal intreaties of his sovereign ; and who survived his appointment only three days. He was supposed to have put an end to his own existence, in consequence of his remorse, for the disgrace, he imagined himself to have sustained. Terrified by so many concomitant circumstances ; the discontents of the people ; the hostility of his old patron ; and the present unfortunate event ; the duke of Grafton deserted the helm of government ; and lord North, who had been, for some time, the minister of the house of commons, was appointed to succeed him.

THE administration of lord North will ever make a principal figure, in the history of this country. It must be acknowledged, in his favour, that the seeds of those calamities, by which his story is
so

so eminently distinguished, were remotely sown, before his accession to office; and that he came forward, at a very alarming and critical period. His appointment was evidently, in some measure, the effect of necessity. It was by chance, that he was placed at the head of affairs. But it has been the distinguishing characteristic of the present reign, that those appointments, which were, at first, the most evidently temporary, have, almost universally, in the end, proved the most permanent.

If this nobleman had never possessed so conspicuous a post, one may almost venture to say, his abilities would never have been thought of. His politics have surely had a sufficient trial, and the event has decided upon their merit. His boasted skill in finance, seems to have partaken of the nature of fairy money, and, when it was called into use, vanished from the touch. If he had any abilities, it appears
to

to have been in debate. At the same time, his voice was harsh, and his manner unweildy. His speeches were never illuminated with one ray of genius; and, when he aimed at animation, he became an object for laughter. But he possessed a sleepiness, and a phlegm, from which it was just possible for him to be roused. The philippics of opposition seldom broke in upon his repose. And, as they simply played upon the surface of his brain, without wounding his mind, he was able to retort them with a buffoonery, that was admired, because it was unresembled. He had the first-rate quality of being able to talk long, without embarrassment. He was able too, to state a matter of complicated calculation, with considerable clearness. In this respect, the day, in which he opened the budget, was the very acmè of his glory.

In some things, his lordship resembled Mr. George Grenville, one of his predecessors.

cessors. Lord Chatham had ever considered this man, as a useful drudge ; and acknowledged, that he had been frequently indebted to his researches. Lord North had served the witty, the volatile Mr. Charles Townshend, in the same capacity ; and that gentleman is said, to have entertained a similar contempt for him. In one respect however, the nobleman in question, was perfectly opposite to his predecessor. Mr. Grenville was shrewd, sagacious and inflexible. Lord North seemed to have no sentiments of his own. He maintained, with the same unvaried countenance, a system today, the very opposite of the system of yesterday. Like the Desdemona of Othello's distempered imagination, he could "turn, " and turn, and yet go on." He seems to have had no objection to the execution of measures, which, at the same time, he professed to disapprove. I am afraid, this is the very worst feature, that can belong to a political character.

THESE

THESE changes however did not make any immediate alteration in the face of affairs. Lord Chatham prosecuted his object, without intermission ; and tried every means for the gratification of the wishes of the people. He endeavoured, both by resolution, and by bill, to reverse the proceedings upon the Middlesex election. He moved to censure the minister, who had advised the king's answer to a remonstrance, upon that subject, from the city of London. And he endeavoured to obtain, from the house of lords, an address to the sovereign, for what was then so eagerly desired, the dissolution of parliament. But all his eloquence was in vain. Ministers did not even seem to study the plausible, and never engaged heartily in the debate, till they came to the division. This venerable hero was repeatedly called down, by the youngest, and least considerable of the peers, for what they pretended to consider, as an undue warmth of expression,—His perseverance however,

however, did not go undistinguished. The city felt a suitable gratitude, and voted their thanks to him for his conduct.

THERE is somewhat remarkable in the speech he delivered, in support of a motion, for augmenting the number of seamen. He concluded with these memorable words: "Although, my lords," said he, "it seems to be so unsettled among us, whether we shall put on the armour of defence;—a question, at worst, if carried in the affirmative, which cannot but be considered, as an act of prudence;—I do now pledge myself to this honourable house, for the truth of what I am going to assert: that, at this very hour, that we are sitting together, there has been a blow of hostility struck against us, by our old inveterate enemies, in some part of the world."—This prediction was, almost immediately, verified, in the affair of Falkland's islands.

POLITICAL

POLITICAL prophecy is a discriminating particular in lord Chatham's character. He willingly indulged himself in it ; and he was perhaps very seldom mistaken. Much was undoubtedly owing to his intelligence ; and much to that sagacity, without which, he pronounced extrinsic intelligence to be nothing. But this is not all. There is an enthusiasm ; if you will, an inspiration, that is connate to all original genius. Nature seems to delight, to own, and to vindicate it, in all it's effervescencies.

IN the mean time, this is perhaps one of the most extraordinary instances of the kind, that is to be met with in history. It may therefore be worth while to attempt to analyze it, and distinctly to assign its various causes. The character of Britain had palpably been sinking for several years in the eyes of Europe. The affair of Corsica had, at once, demonstrated this circumstance, and increased it. Warlike preparations were commenced
in

in the ports of France and Spain. The continuance therefore of the general tranquillity was become precarious. But there is something peremptory and circumstantial in the prediction I have related, that these considerations do, by no means account for. The object of the preparations was apparently uncertain. We were, at present, in full, peace; and, if its duration were precarious, the immediate commencement of hostilities was much more so. It was improbable, that the enemy should begin, by a precipitate attack, upon a distant and unimportant part of the empire. The attack made no part of any regular system; and therefore, as the part of such a system, it could not be developed.

THE territorial right to the islands in question, was a matter, involved in the utmost obscurity. The Spaniard however had invaded our possession, without any previous discussion, and in full peace ;
and

and had stripped us of it, with circumstances of deliberated insult. This proceeding certainly demanded exemplary reparation. They seemed however much disposed, to procrastinate the negociation. At length, by the mediation of France, in the hopes of whose warlike assistance they appear to have been disappointed, they consented to replace every thing in it's former situation. The acceptance of these terms might have been ascribed to a spirit of moderation. No object of dispute could certainly be more frivolous, or more unworthy of plunging half mankind in the horrors of war. It came out however, some time after, by the confession of the French ambassador, that, in order to obtain these terms, we were obliged to stipulate, on our part, the finally evacuating the disputed islands; and the being the first to desist from our warlike preparations.

PROCEEDINGS, like these, though the last article was, at that time, only sus-

O

pected,

pected, were so much the reverse of the haughty and decisive manners of lord Chatham, that it is not to be wondered at, that he strained every nerve, to obtain a parliamentary stigma, upon the conduct of the British negociators. He compared the present compromise, to the famous convention of sir Robert Walpole, that led the way to the war of 1739; and asserted the probability of a similar event.

WITH that unchanging perseverance, that constitute so leading a trait of his character, he brought forward, once again, the affair of the Middlesex election. In order however to vary the subject of discussion, he digressed into a stricture, upon some recent particulars, in the conduct of our courts of justice, that were thought to infringe, upon that invaluable characteristic of the English constitution, the trial by jury. The person, who was principally pointed at, in this affair;

affair; and who did not meet the discussion, with that readiness, which the public desired, was the celebrated lord Mansfield. He was nearly of the same age with our hero; and they came forward, about the same time, to general observation. He was the greatest of all lord Chatham's contemporaries upon the public stage. The celebrated compliment of Pope to him, is not less just, than it is beautiful; that nature had left it in his choice, whether he would be a Tully, or a Maro. Minute observers have pretended to discover in him, something of the vindictive, and something too much of art. He has been uniformly accused, of leaning towards the principles of despotism. In the mean time, the firmness of his judgment, and the honourable uniformity of his conduct, will not permit us, for a moment, to doubt of his sincerity, in all the sentiments he professes. That however, which we dare not blame, we may have leave to lament.

THE

THE session closed with an affair, that, at once, revived all the democratical ardour, that had attended the proceedings against Mr. Wilkes. An imperfect account had long been given, in the public papers, of the debates of the house of commons, with impunity; though there was a standing order against it. At this time, a member thought fit to complain of the misrepresentation he had suffered; and the printers were immediately ordered into custody. Three of them were soon after apprehended, and severally carried before the lord mayor, and the aldermen Wilkes and Oliver; who discharged them from confinement, and bound them over to prosecute their captors. Inflamed at this instance of contempt, the house committed Mr. Oliver and the chief magistrate to the tower. Some difficulty arising, concerning the manner of Mr. Wilkes's appearance before them, who claimed, as a member; his conduct passed without animadversion. The two prisoners were attended

attended to confinement by the acclamations of the people. They were followed by the thanks of their fellow citizens. And the day of their liberation was celebrated, with every mark of festivity and triumph. The dislike, that parliament had incurred, was so far swelled by this business, that lord Chatham employed it, as a strong additional argument, when he renewed his motion, to address the king to dissolve them.

IN the following session, his lordship came forward, as the advocate of religious liberty, in support of a bill for the relief of Protestant dissenters. The year 1772 was undistinguished by any remarkable event. The popular spirit began, at this time, to subside; and has since remained, for the most part, in a state of languor and inactivity. The strength of opposition in parliament was also decaying; Mr. George Grenville was some time dead, and lord Chatham began, once

again, to withdraw himself from the public theatre. It was now that the character of the minister began, most visibly, to give a colour to the public counsels. Generally slow : anon, decisive, with a veil of constitutional modesty ; violent, under the guise of phlegmatic moderation.

THIS temperature was exceedingly visible, in the measures, that were now adopted, respecting the East India company. The scheme of lord Chatham, whatever it was, was compromised, by his successors in office, in consideration of a large annual subsidy, to be paid to government ; which, it afterwards appeared, the company could ill spare ; but the payment of which they preferred, to that invasion, which was threatened, of their territorial claims. At this time, they became so embarrassed in their affairs, as to be obliged to discontinue the subsidy ; and even to demand,

mand, from government, a considerable loan. The minister, beholding the company prostrate at his feet, considered this, as the time, to assert his supremacy. Without actually depriving them of their possessions, he established a parliamentary assertion, that they held them by sufferance, and, in consequence, passed a great number of vexatious regulations ; which threw a considerable weight of influence into the scale of government, but which were little less obnoxious, than would have been the most peremptory and unqualified proceedings. At the same time, he seemed willing to grant them some compensation.

ADMINISTRATION had long triumphed in the success of their American measures. They saw, however not openly, the tea imported, and the tax, in some measure, submitted to. They did not know, that the stillness, that prevailed in that country, was the stillness of reflection ;

tion ; and they could not perceive, that their minds were progressively alienating from dependance upon Britain. They fancied, they saw them reconciling, by degrees, to unlimited submission: things, they believed, had continued long enough, in their present course: this was the time to act with decision. Accordingly they imagined, they should effect two purposes, at once, by granting to the East India company, who heretofore had never exported her own commodities, the liberty of exporting tea, in whatever quantity, without being subject to the usual impositions. Thus encouraged, the company shipped a considerable quantity for America.

No sooner had the account of these things crossed the Atlantic, than America rose up, as one man ; and all the colonies, without any previous concert, resolved, not to permit the cargoes to be landed. In most places, the vessels, perceiving

perceiving their voyage to have been to no purpose, peaceably returned. At Boston, and other places, this was refused. Finding therefore no other remedy, and persuaded, that the tea would be brought on shore, by degrees, and their resolves evaded, a considerable party of the inhabitants went on board, in disguise; and having, without interruption, destroyed the cargoes, immediately dispersed.

MATTERS were thus brought to a very serious crisis. The minister, who, in the foregoing session, had trampled upon a defenceless commercial company, now imagined, he could do the same with three millions of people, stretched over a wide continent, of fifteen hundred miles in extent: with a people, whose ancestors had left their native fields, and fled to the uncouth deserts of America, in pursuit of liberty; and who themselves, nursed in the lap of strenuous freedom,

freedom, were now in the first stage of cultivation, hardy, laborious, intrepid and enterprising. Administration owed all its misapprehensions concerning them, in a manner, to one source; the misinformation of the provincial governors. It had been observed, in the commencement of the last war, that the Indians, almost universally, sided with the French. Their commanders, persons of generous blood, and gentle demeanour, won over the natives, by their accommodating manners, and their equitable conduct: while ours, men, for the most part, of broken fortunes, and ruined character, employed no management, and understood no policy. Posterity will look back astonished, to see their ancestors, sacrificing their dearest possessions, to the precipitation of a very few obscure individuals, in their origin base, and in their persons contemptible.

In this manner then misled, administration determined upon measures of the boldest

boldest description. Their policy was comprised in four acts of parliament ; for shutting up the port of Boston ; for changing the government of the province of Massachusset's-bay ; for adjourning the trial of delinquents in America, from one of the colonies, to another, or to Great Britain ; and for extending the limits, and granting an establishment to the French system of policy and religion in Canada.—In the course of this session, and a little previous to the disclosure of the above system, opposition obtained a most invaluable acquisition, in the person of Mr. Charles Fox.

C H A P. VIII.

Meeting of the general congress.—Lord Chatham's conciliatory plan.—Coercive measures pursued.—Commencement of the war.—Declaration of independency.—Campaign of 1776.—Expedition from Canada.

THOUGH, in the year 1770, lord Chatham had come forward, with an apparent determination, from thenceforth to take a regular share, in the parliamentary deliberations; he however found himself irresistibly baffled by the encroachments of disease. From his youth, he had been the martyr of an hereditary gout. Scarcely any person was ever subject to that painful distemper, in a greater degree. For some years, before his death, he was, in a manner, confined to his chamber. It was only, at distant intervals,

tervals, that he could tear himself from the couch of imbecility ; and appear, in his darling character of a senator, and upon his proper theatre, the great council of the nation. But rare, as these appearances were, they acquired, from that circumstance, an additional splendour. It was no longer proper, for this hero of a former age, to waste his efforts upon a vulgar theme ; or, in any case, to join in the cry of a party, or view situations, through the medium of private affection. Aloof from the herd of lifted combatants, it became him, as it were, to dictate his sentiments from a more elevated station : and he seemed to require a theme, new, as his situation ; and large, as his god-like soul. And such a theme was provided for him.

It may not be unpleasing, to recollect, for a moment, by what gradual steps, he rose to an elevation, which never mortal knew beside him. In his commencement,
 he

he appeared humble and unassuming, very limited in his income, and placed at the very foot of a profession, in which merit often grows gray in obscurity. It was by silent, unobserved steps, by laborious study, and accumulated reflection, that he advanced. At length, he took his seat in parliament, and became distinguished for an eloquence, beautiful, magnificent and imposing. By degrees, he far outstripped his competitors, and stood alone, the rival of antiquity.—Fixed in his character for eloquence, he was now destined to appear in a different scene. He became the first minister of Britain ; the sole conductor of an arduous war ; the object, upon which the hopes of his country, and the apprehensions of contending Europe, were ultimately fixed. In this situation, it is little to say, that he called forth the long forgotten magnanimity of the empire ; that uninterrupted, unrivalled success attended his administration. He was himself a
host.

host. His name alone, withered the hearts of our enemies, and made their arms drop useless from their hands. His reputation founded through the universe. Dismissed from power, he became independent, and self-moved. His eloquence gave him dignity; his information fixed attention; and his character attracted love. He was the patron of the oppressed; the corrector of ministerial rashness; and the prophetic soul of Britain.—Still however, something human hung about him. He had not yet shaken off the infirmities of ambition; or laid aside the garb of party. He came forward too much upon trifling occasions; and gave into the exaggerated representations, which are perhaps necessary to a regular opposition. But such were not the errors of his closing years. Infirmary, at least, curbed his ever active spirit. I will not say, that heaven provided the awful scene of an American war, to give new lustre to the setting sun. But I will say, that
heaven

heaven prolonged the shutting day, that it might finally close, with untried splendours, for the world to wonder at. Perhaps no man ever filled so important a situation. A thousand circumstances seemed to point him out, as the arbiter of two contending countries, great in their inherent magnitude, and whose dispute was, every way, peculiarly interesting. Ah, happy Britain! had she seized the golden opportunity; and listened to the voice of native sagacity, and accumulated experience, which was thus poured in her ears. In the mean time, the want of success, which attended the efforts of our hero, however, as men, we may lament it; in the eye of abstract taste, perhaps contributes, to the whole, a finishing beauty. This is its language. “If
 “ Britain could have been saved, by this
 “ right-hand it had been saved.” And this is its effect. To give an unspeakable solemnity to the scene, and to complete the most awful tragedy in the world, by
 joining,

joining, with the death of Chatham, the crush of a mighty empire in his ruins.

It was in the close of the session, whose principal acts have already been described, that this nobleman appeared, once again, within the walls of parliament, in opposition to the Canada bill. He lamented that want of health, which prevented him, from bearing his uniform testimony, against every part of so destructive a system. He went over the same ground of argument and advice, to which he had adhered, upon this subject, with the most unalterable consistency. But his principal effort was reserved, for the commencement of the year 1775.

In the mean time, the ensuing summer appeared with the most serious and threatening aspect in America. Both parties were backward in proceeding to extremities. But the impending tempest, the more slowly it forms, and the longer it

is brewing over our heads, grows so much blacker and blacker, and rushes upon us, at last, with more tremendous fury. Administration had closed the session with triumph, and expected, that the firmness of their countenance was immediately to terrify America into abject submission. The event was exactly the reverse of the prediction. Menace and coercion serve only to rouse the manly spirit. Every province associated herself, in the cause of liberty; and the weak and improvident measures, that were intended to divide them, proved to them, the cement of an indissoluble union. They immediately elected a general congress, who determined upon the most deliberate measures for their future safety; and concluded with drawing up addresses, to their fellow citizens; to their neighbours of Canada; and to the inhabitants of Britain; together with a petition to the throne. These papers were executed with uncommon energy and address;

addresses; and, in vigour of sentiment, and the nervous language of patriotism, would not certainly have disgraced any assembly, that ever existed.

THE session of 1775, especially in its commencement, certainly included as awful a crisis, as can be imagined. The event of peace or war; the immediate desolation of America; the eventual ruin of Britain; and the emancipation of one half of the world, palpably hung upon their first determinations. Ministry, in order to have a clearer field before them, had previously dissolved the old parliament, and summoned a new one. In their last session, it had been usual, for the commons, to consult the temper of their constituents more, than upon other occasions, in order to insure their suffrages, at the general election. And it was indispensibly necessary, that they should be unshackled, in the commencement of so arduous an adventure.

IN the mean time, the servants of the crown were so backward, in bringing out their American system, that the plan of conciliation, formed by lord Chatham, had the start of them. He began with a motion, for withdrawing the royal forces from Boston. He told the house, that, in this distracted situation of affairs, he had crawled thither, to offer them the best of his experience and advice. He urged the necessity of the step he had recommended, as the means of opening a way for settling the dangerous troubles in America, by beginning to allay ferments, and soften animosities there. He said, an hour now lost, might produce years of calamity. His object was, to put his foot upon the threshold of peace. His present motion was only the introduction, to a comprehensive plan; and he pledged himself to the house, that he would not desert for a moment the conduct of this mighty business. Unless nailed to his bed by the extremity of sickness,

sickness, he would give it his unremit-
ted attention; he would knock at the
door of a sleeping and confounded mini-
stry, and rouse them to a sense of their
important danger.

HE described the situation of the troops
at Boston, as truly unworthy, being pen-
ned up, and pining in inglorious inac-
tivity. He called them, an army of im-
potence and contempt: and, to make the
folly equal to the disgrace, they were an
army of irritation. “ You irritate your
“ colonies to unappeasable rancour. It is
“ not repealing this, or that act of par-
“ liament; not the annihilation of a few
“ dirty shreds of parchment, that can
“ restore America to your bosom. You
“ must repeal her fears; and her resent-
“ ments; and you may then hope for her
“ love and gratitude.”

HE was lavish in his praises of the
congress. For himself, he must avow,
that

that in all his reading and observation :
—and it had been his favourite study :
he had read Thucydides ; and had studied and admired the master states of the world :—antiquity recorded nothing, more honourable, more respectable, than this despised meeting. “ It has been in circulation, that, if the stamp act had never been repealed, we should, at this hour, have been at peace and quietness with America : and from this, many people urge the danger, as well as inefficacy of conciliating measures, at present. I know, on the contrary, from the most respectable authority, that these were, at that instant, the prevalent and steady principles of America : that you might destroy their towns, might cut them off from the superfluities, and even the conveniences of life ; but that they were prepared to despise your power, and would not lament their loss, while they had,—what, my lords ?—their woods, and their liberty.

“ Do

“ Do you think, that men, who could
 “ be roused to forego their profits, their
 “ pleasures, and the peaceable enjoy-
 “ ment of their dearest connections, all
 “ for the sake of liberty, will be whip-
 “ ped into vassalage, like slaves? Why,
 “ this conduct in government, is so fan-
 “ tastical and aerial in practice, that it,
 “ by far, exceeds the boldest wing of
 “ poetry; for poetry has often read in-
 “ structive, as well as pleasing lessons to
 “ mankind; and, though she sometimes
 “ amuse herself in fiction, that fiction,
 “ to please, should be founded in veri-
 “ similitude. But, in this wise system,
 “ there is nothing like truth; nothing
 “ like policy; nothing like justice, ex-
 “ perience, or common sense.”

“ We shall be forced ultimately to
 “ retract: let us retract, while we can
 “ do it with honour. These violent,
 “ oppressive acts must be repealed. I
 “ pledge myself for it, that you will,
 “ in

“ in the end, repeal them. I stake my
“ reputation upon it. I will consent
“ to be taken for an idiot, if they are
“ not finally repealed. The cause of
“ America is allied to every true whig.
“ This glorious spirit animates three
“ millions of men in our colonies. What
“ shall oppose this spirit? aided by the
“ congenial flame, glowing in the breast
“ of every whig in England, to the
“ amount, I hope, of double the Ame-
“ rican numbers. Ireland they have to
“ a man. Nay, what dependence can
“ you have upon your soldiery, the un-
“ happy instruments of your wrath?
“ They are Englishmen, who must feel
“ for the privileges of Englishmen;
“ and their carrying muskets and bayo-
“ nets about them, surely does not ex-
“ clude them from the pale of civil
“ community. Foreign war hangs over
“ your heads, by a slight and brittle
“ thread. France and Spain are watch-
“ ing

“ ing your conduct, and waiting for the
 “ maturity of your errors.

“ BUT you are anxious, who should
 “ disarm first? The great poet, and
 “ perhaps a greater politician, than ever
 “ he was a poet, has given you the
 “ wisest counsel; follow it.

“ *Tuque prior, tu parce; genus qui ducis*
 “ *Olimpo;*

“ *Projice tela manu.*

“ With a dignity, becoming your ex-
 “ alted situation, make the first advances
 “ to concord, to peace and happiness;
 “ for that is your true dignity, to act
 “ with prudence and with justice.”

THE noble earl concluded his ani-
 mated harrangue in the following em-
 phatical manner. “ My lords, if the
 “ ministers thus persevere in misadvising
 “ and misleading the king, I will not
 “ say, that they can alienate the affec-
 “ tions of his subjects from his crown;
 “ but I will affirm, that they will make
 “ the

“ the crown not worth his wearing. I
“ will not say, that the king is betray-
“ ed ; but I will affirm, that the king-
“ dom is undone.”

THE times were greatly changed, since this wonderful man moulded the attentive senate. Formerly he had touched a master passion in humanity, and thundered in their ears the advancement of their country's dignity and power. Now he addressed an assembly, all whose prejudices and pre-conceptions were in opposition to him. He had armed them against himself, by the successes of the last war, and the immeasurable haughtiness they inspired. Wrapped in the contemplation of their own grandeur and irresistible strength, he had to reason down in them the pride of empire ; and to persuade those to yield, who imagined themselves able to dictate. Perhaps no orator ever succeeded in a cause, in which it was impossible for him
to

to interest any active passion of the soul in his favour.

THE rejection however of his motion, did not discourage lord Chatham, from bringing forward the body of that conciliatory scheme; which he had already, in part, announced, and to which the motion was only introductory. He accordingly offered to the house, the outlines of “ a provisional act, for settling
“ the troubles in America; and for as-
“ serting the supreme legislative autho-
“ rity, and superintending power of
“ Great Britain, over her colonies.” Among a great variety of matter, the bill was to declare the colonies, dependent upon the crown, and subordinate to the parliament of Britain. It asserted the competency of parliament, to make laws to bind America, in matters, touching the general weal; and more especially in regulating affairs of navigation and trade. It admitted, that
no

no tax, tallage, or revenue could be levied in America, except by common consent in their provincial assemblies. It legalised the holding the ensuing session of congress, for the double purpose of recognising the superintending power of the British legislature; and of making a grant to the king of a certain perpetual revenue, subject to the disposition of parliament; not as a condition for redress, but as a testimony of affection. Lastly, it eventually repealed the obnoxious acts of parliament.

It's illustrious author intreated the assistance of the house, to digest the crude materials, which in the form of a bill, he had presumed to lay before them. He called on them, to exercise their candour; and deprecated the effects of party and prejudice, of factious spleen, or blind predilection. He declared himself to be actuated by no narrow principle, or personal consideration. And he said, that,

that, though his bill might be looked upon, as a bill of concession, it was impossible, not, at the same time, to confess, that it was a bill of assertion.— Things were however now carried with so high a hand, that the bill was rejected, by a majority of almost two to one, and not even suffered to lie upon the table.

It cannot reasonably be doubted, that this bill, if it had passed into a law, would have been productive of the most salutary consequences. To affirm so complicated a measure, to have been, in all its parts unexceptionable, would be to advance a most adventurous position. But the very veneration and confidence, that America entertained for the character of lord Chatham, would have led them to review it, in a very different spirit; from that, which actuated them in surveying, what they thought, the contracted and insidious schemes of the persons,

sons, then in administration. The whole continent was, as yet, by no means, persuaded into the manly and decisive ideas of independence and total separation. And the more resolute and philosophical would doubtless have postponed their conceptions, to the dread of disunion, and the recollection of the possible mischances, and inseparable calamities of war.

By this distinguished parliamentary effort, ministry were roused to bring forward their own plan. They declared a rebellion, actually existing, in the province of Massachuset's bay. They brought in a bill, for restraining the commerce, and annihilating the fisheries of the New England provinces. The principles of this bill were, soon after, extended to most of the southern colonies. And to wind up the whole, they introduced, what they called, a conciliatory proposition, permitting each colony separately, to offer a certain income to government,

government, which, if approved, might be accepted in lieu of a parliamentary revenue. This was the consummation of the plan, at this time, avowed by administration, and founded in the maxim, as impolitic, as it is detestable, *divide et impera*. Ten thousand men was the force, destined to carry the ministerial ideas into execution.—In the mean time, towards the close of the session, Mr. Burke, the profoundest politician, and the most eloquent speaker of the commons, proposed a plan of conciliation, to that house, in a considerable degree, similar to that of lord Chatham.

BUT the season of deliberation was now at an end. The standard of civil war was unfurled. By the unaccountable ignorance and improvidence of our government, on the one hand, and the unremitting exertions of the Americans, on the other ; they saw themselves, by the close of the ensuing winter, masters of the whole continent, from Nova Scotia, northward,

northward, to Florida, on the south ; and, to the east, they were only checked, after a very critical escape, on our part, by the fortrefs of Quebec. In the mean time, the expences of this campaign were computed, to exceed those of any, the most celebrated periods of the last war.—It was in this stage, that America made her last effort towards a treaty, by a very celebrated petition from the continental congress, distinguished by the moderation of its demands, and teeming with expressions of duty, respect and loyalty to the king, and unfeigned affection for the parent state. To this petition it was signified, by the command of his majesty, that no answer would be given.

GOVERNMENT were now taught to understand, how much they had been mistaken, respecting the strength of America. The discovery however did not turn their thoughts to peace. In the beginning of the following session, their language

guage indeed was more indecisive. In the course of it, their notions hardened into form. The mild and candid earl of Dartmouth was removed from the American department, and succeeded by the severe and saturnine lord George Germaine. To him most of the subsequent American measures have generally been attributed. The language of administration was gradually screwed up to the highest pitch; and no terms were now held out, but those of unconditional submission. This lofty stile was accompanied with the most immense preparations; and the romantic exploits of an Alexander, or a Charles the twelfth, seemed ready to be acted over again, upon the theatre of the new world.

It was this terrific crisis, that the general congress of America chose additionally to signalise, by a declaration of independency. The royal forces were already hovering over the central pro-

Q

vince

vince of New York. It is an example of intrepidity, not to be paralleled in the annals of mankind. It was little likely, that a resolution, thus announced, should ever be retracted. In a word, a new era was palpably fixed in the history of the globe.—The campaign of 1776 was however studded over with the most brilliant successes. But they proved, as it usually happens, in such fairy projects, more brilliant, than they were durable.

THE following session of parliament was less active, than most of the preceding. Intoxicated, as we were, with our temporary successes, opposition despaired of any good consequences, from resisting the general voice of an unreflecting nation. The declaration of independency too had created a new situation. And it is probable, that party had not yet made up their mind, respecting the plan of conduct, that might now be requisite. Accordingly, influenced by one, or both
of

of these motives, the majority of them, after a few unsuccessful efforts, took the resolution of absenting themselves, in all discussions, relative to the present unhappy contest.

IN the mean time, affairs began to assume a less favourable appearance. The campaign had ended somewhat abruptly. Our forces received a check, during the winter, that turned back the tide upon us, with irresistible impetuosity. All Europe had beheld the strenuous resistance of America with predilection; and the court of France, in particular, was supposed to be biased in her favour, at once, by sentiment, and by policy. The declaration of independency had probably been made, partly in accommodation to her views. At this time, the celebrated Dr. Franklin, the nursing mother, and the guardian genius of the United States, arrived in that country, to plead their cause. Every thing was to be reckoned

upon, from his hoary wisdom, his intimate knowledge of mankind, and his consummate political address.

A PERIOD, like this, when we were not unsuccessful, but when the forerunners of misfortune thickened upon us, from every side, brought lord Chatham again down to the house of lords. The session closed with his proposal, for an address to the sovereign, beseeching him, “to take the most speedy and effectual measures, for putting a stop to hostilities in America, by the removal of accumulated grievances.” Under the words, “accumulated grievances,” his lordship intended to convey every thing, that had passed in parliament, relative to America, since the year 1763. This, he said, would be the herald of peace. And he particularly insisted, upon the immediate necessity of adopting this measure, from the imminent danger, to which we were exposed, from, what national politics

litics had taught him to call, “our natural, hereditary and inveterate enemies” of the house of Bourbon. A few weeks, he asserted, might decide our fate, as a nation. A treaty, between France and America, would be that final decision. America was contending with us, under a masked battery of France, which would infallibly open upon us, as soon, as our weakness, and her preparations were sufficiently advanced.—The motion was rejected by a large majority.

THE campaign of 1777 was decisive of the fate of the war.—General Burgoyne, in pursuance of a plan, which was esteemed the favourite child of the American secretary, marched an army from Canada, against the back settlements of the northern provinces. Sir William Howe, the commander in chief at New York, opened the campaign, on that side, by an unsuccessful effort, to dislodge the main army of the states. In these pro-

ceedings, the first part of the summer was consumed. The autumn was more busy and active. General Burgoyne, by the impracticable nature of the country, through which he was to pass ; and by the northern militia, which incessantly harassed him in his march, was reduced, to surrender his whole army prisoners of war. Sir William Howe, after a tedious voyage, from New York, up the Chesapeake, at length, advanced, by that route, against the central post of Philadelphia. The proceedings of the army, in this situation, partook of the brilliancy of the former campaign ; but that brilliancy no longer deceived any body:

THE news of these latter events had not yet reached England, when the parliament met. The disaster of the northern force began indeed to be generally conjectured. The superiority of the British in Pennsylvania, was less clearly foreseen. The invincible partiality of
France,

France, to the revolted colonies, formed a principal object of the public attention. The naval preparations, that were carried on, in her ports, were, to the last degree alarming. The cabals, in that court, seemed daily ripening towards decision. Never was there a session of parliament, more teeming with important events, than the present.

C H A P. IX.

Fourth session of the third parliament of George the third.—Address to the throne.—Enquiry into the state of the nation.—Transaction with lord Bute.—Lord North's conciliatory bills.—Treaty between France and America avowed.—Debate concerning the independency of America.—Death.—And character of lord Chatham.

THE situation of his country, which had for some years been growing more and more critical, and now seemed fast verging to it's acmè, roused lord Chatham to bestow his whole attention, upon the affairs of the public. Curbed by, what was esteemed, the irresistible force of disease, he had, of late, appeared rarely upon the public theatre; and reserved himself

himself for singular and distant occasions. At this time, he shook off the fetters of his destiny. He grappled with the chilling powers of hoary age, and set mortality itself at defiance. He stripped the slough of wrinkled years, and burst forth with all the vigour and activity of spritely youth. He came down continually to the house of lords, resolved to spend his last breath, in pouring the warning voice of anxious generosity, and inextinguishable patriotism, in the ears of his country.

ON the first day of the session, he moved an amendment, to the address to the throne, recommending an immediate cessation of hostilities, as preliminary to a treaty of peace. Never was he more animated than upon this occasion. Though borne down with the weight of years, his speech afforded no equivocal specimen of what had been his youthful powers.— In the first part of the address, he said, he should heartily concur. No man, rejoiced

joiced more sincerely, than he did, upon an addition to the royal family, and the safe recovery of the queen. But he must stop here. His courtly complaisance would carry him no farther. He could not join in congratulation upon misfortune and disgrace. It was a perilous and tremendous moment, and not a time for adulation. It was necessary, to dispell the delusion and darkness, which enveloped the throne; and to display in it's full danger, and it's native colours, the ruin, that was brought to our doors. "This, my lords," said he, "is our duty. We sit here, the hereditary council of the nation."

"AND who is the minister, where is the minister, that has dared to suggest to the throne, the contrary, unconstitutional language, this day, delivered from it? The accustomed language, from the throne, has been, an application for advice: as it is the right of parliament

“ parliament to give, so it is the duty of
 “ the crown to ask it. But, on this day,
 “ at this awful moment, the crown, from
 “ itself, and by itself, declares an unalter-
 “ able determination, to pursue measures
 “ ——and what measures, my lords?—
 “ the measures, which have already re-
 “ duced this late flourishing empire, to
 “ ruin and contempt. *But yesterday,*
 “ *and England might have stood against the*
 “ *world; now none so poor, to do her re-*
 “ *verence.* I use the words of a poet;
 “ but, though it be poetry, it is no fic-
 “ tion. And can the minister of the day,
 “ now expect a continuance of support,
 “ in this ruinous infatuation? Can par-
 “ liament be so dead to it's dignity
 “ and it's duty, as to be thus deluded, in-
 “ to the loss of the one, and the viola-
 “ tion of the other?”

His lordship then drew an affecting
 picture of our weakness at home, and our
 situation, with respect to foreign powers;
 the

the insults, we were compelled to pocket, and the evasions, at which we were forced to connive. He blamed the conduct of the war. He condemned the employing foreign mercenaries against our brethren. He reprobated, in the most glowing colours, the associating the savage Indians to our standard.—The independent views of America were stated, as the foundation of our proceedings. No man, he said, wished more, for the due dependence of America upon this country, than himself. But he pleaded for our granting her the participation of our rights. In a just and honourable quarrel, he said, he would part with the shirt off his back, to support the contest. But, in the present ignominious dispute, he would not contribute; no, not a shilling.

He warned them, that the present moment was perhaps the last, in which we could hope for success in these views. In her negotiations with France, he said,
America

America had, or thought she had reason to complain. It was notorious, that she had received, from that power, important supplies and assistance, of various kinds. But it was certain, that she expected something more immediate and decisive. She was now in ill humour. America and France, he said, could not be congenial. There was something confirmed and decisive in the honest American, that would not assimilate to the futility and levity of Frenchmen.

He asked, in this complicated crisis of weakness at home, and calamity abroad ; terrified and insulted by the neighbouring powers ; unable to act in America, or acting, only to be destroyed : where was the man, with the forehead, to promise, or hope for success ? “ You cannot conciliate America by your present measures. You cannot subdue her by your present, or any measures. What then can you do ? You cannot conquer, “ you

“ you cannot gain ; but you can address.
“ You can lull the fears and anxie-
“ ties of the moment, into an ignorance
“ of the danger, that should produce
“ them.”

THE season was long past, since the fortune of Europe seemed, to hang upon the voice of this illustrious personage ; and he appeared the arbiter of peace and war to mankind. His eminent services could not command respect. Neither his hoary age, nor the disinterested patriotism, by which he was distinguished, could compel veneration. It seemed to have become fashionable, among the court lords, not only to treat his advices, with an affected indifference ; but even to thwart and overbear him upon smaller matters, in a way, that, at least, merited the appellations of captiousness and petulance. What party was eventually disgraced, by this conduct, I shall leave it to my reader to determine.

IN consequence of this disposition, lord Chatham's speech, at the opening of the session, involved him in two sharp contests. In stating our internal debility, he had asserted, that we had scarcely twenty ships of the line, ready to put to sea. The position was warmly controverted, by the earl of Sandwich, at that time, first lord of the admiralty. This nobleman was a man of gay manners, and a lively wit; an attractive companion, and a steady friend. At the same time, his principles were, in the utmost degree, relaxed and dissolute. One of his favourite maxims seems to have been, the laudableness of deceiving those, with whose affairs he was intrusted, when he had any valuable end in view. At this time, he told the house, that he should esteem
“ that first lord of the admiralty, worthy
“ to lose his head, who did not constant-
“ ly maintain a fleet, that should be able
“ to face the united house of Bourbon.”
For his own part, he was happy to in-
form

form them, that we had now thirtyfive ships of the line, ready for sea, and seven more, that would be ready in a fortnight. Unfortunately however, lord Chatham's assertion seemed to gain more credit, even at the time, than lord Sandwich's. After what has been said, it is almost superfluous to mention, that the admiral, who was appointed, to command this boasted fleet, found only six ships ready, in the following March; and, by the most strenuous exertions, was enabled to sail with twenty, in June, against thirty two, that lay in Brest harbour.

THE other dispute was carried on with more acrimony. A noble lord in office had undertaken, to answer the principal heads of lord Chatham's speech; and, in defence of the measure of employing the savages, he said, he was clearly of opinion, that we were fully justified, in using every means, "that God and nature had put into our hands, to crush rebellion."

—This

—This strong expression roused lord Chatham to reply. He began with the most abrupt astonishment. After having arraigned the measure, in the most pointed terms, that language could furnish, he concluded: “My lords,” said he, “I am
 “old, and weak, and, at present, unable
 “to say more: but my feelings and my
 “indignation were too strong, to have
 “said less. I could not have slept this
 “night in my bed, nor reposed my
 “head upon my pillow; without giving
 “this vent, to my eternal abhorrence of
 “such preposterous and enormous prin-
 “ciples.”

IN answer to this severe language, earl Gower, who seems to have entertained a considerable personal animosity against lord Chatham, expressed his surprise, that such sentiments should fall from him, who had himself adopted the same measure, in the last war. For the truth of this, he appealed to the noble person,

R

who

who had then commanded in America. Lord Chatham however denied to the last, that the measure proceeded from him: and warmly asked, how lord Gower should know any thing of a business, which happened, at a time, when he was wholly engaged in the pursuit of his pleasures; while himself was eagerly immersed in the public concerns. This sarcasm led the younger peer to reply, in a stile, the most opprobrious and abusive, that was ever employed, to the meanest titled pimp, that, at any time, disgraced the walls of that house.

THE Rockingham connexion had now chosen their party in public affairs. It was to recommend the immediate acknowledgement of the American independency. The head of this party has been characterised, as “mild, but determined.” They are described, when in administration, as having “looked, in the “face, that dazzling influence, at which
“ the

“the eyes of eagles have blenched.” The character, which they had already acquired; upon this occasion, they greatly vindicated. They displayed the first and most unequivocal mark of true heroism. Tremendous and unexampled, as was the situation of Britain, they dared look that situation, in the face. It was a scene, from which the eagle eye of Chatham turned away in confusion. They viewed that scene with calmness; they made their election with deliberation; and they asserted it. The generality of their countrymen, at that time, learned, with astonishment, and reprobated their system. But the longer it is remembered, the more it will be admired. Distant posterity shall vindicate it's manly fortitude, and superior wisdom.

THE person, who took the lead, upon this occasion, and whose conduct must immortalise his name, was the duke of

R. 2

Richmond.

Richmond. In order to bring forward his plan, with all it's intrinsic advantage, he moved an enquiry into the state of the nation. Administration, who had long overborne every proposal of minority, were now so far humbled, by their new situation, as to grant the demand. It was followed by motions, for the necessary papers. Lord Chatham, who probably did not see the design of the measure, expressed the warmest acknowledgements to it's author. In the mean time, the duke closed his motions, with opening, to the house, the system he had formed. His object was to obtain peace with America. He hoped this enquiry would open the eyes of the whole kingdom, and engage them to think seriously, of forming a grand compact, with that country; by whose assistance and reunion, he said, we should be able, to bid defiance to all the compacts in Europe. This was an alliance, that would well deserve the name of "the family compact."

ADMINISTRATION

ADMINISTRATION, who were now at a loss, how to proceed, moved, soon after, to adjourn parliament, for six weeks, for the Christmas holidays. This measure was strenuously opposed by lord Chatham, and the other members of opposition. That nobleman, in particular, confidently predicted a dreadful and unexpected blow, during the recess; that would make administration dearly repent the step, they were taking. He said, for his own part, though standing, with pain and difficulty, upon a crutch; if the house would only adjourn, he did not say, from day to day, but to very short intervals, he would constantly attend his duty.—A noble lord in office replied; and, among other things, dropped an expression, that was highly resented, by the friends of the venerable patriot. He said, he did not wonder, that some peers wished, to continue the sitting of the house, that they might give their opinions, in the only place, where they

could give them; in the only place, where they would be taken.

ONE of the difficulties, principally felt by administration, was that of recruiting their American armies. They could hire no more troops in Germany. They had already greatly weakened the home defence. In this situation, the principal business of the recess was, the endeavouring to make new levies by private subscription. If parliament were kept sitting, they feared, the clamour of opposition might quash the experiment, in the bud. As it was, though they met with some mortifying disappointments, they succeeded, upon the whole, so far, as to raise 1500 men.

WHILE they were busied in this smaller game, an affair of the first magnitude, which had been long in agitation, was hastening to a conclusion. In a word, a treaty of commerce was now executed,

ted, between France and America ; and, in consideration of the offence, that Great Britain might possibly take at the step, they, at the same time, entered into an eventual treaty of defensive alliance. The former was signed, on the thirtieth of January, and the latter, on the sixth of February following.

In the very week of this transaction, an extraordinary affair happened, relative to our hero, which afterwards furnished a subject of much disquisition. It was a transaction, between the earl of Bute, and lord Chatham. As the affair is involved, in considerable obscurity, I will, first, simply state the facts, as they appear, upon the face of the evidence.

SIR James Wright, an intimate friend of lord Bute, and Dr. Addington, an eminent physican, who attended the earl of Chatham, had repeatedly entertained each other, with political conversation,

in which the names of their respective patrons were introduced. The frequent recurrency of this theme, was, it seems, first animadverted upon by sir James, or one of his friends; and it was thought proper, in consequence, to communicate the purport of these conversations to lord Bute. Thus the circumstance is related, in one part of the account, published in sir James's own name; though elsewhere he seems to say, that the communication was made, at the immediate request of Dr. Addington. Lord Bute, in answer, wished the Dr. to be requested, to assure lord Chatham, "that if he
" should think proper to take an active
" part in administration, he should have
" his most hearty concurrence, and sincere good wishes." He said, "for his
" own part, nothing, but the most imminent danger to this country, should induce him, to take a part in the government of it, in conjunction with an
" able and upright administration." In
the

the mean time, Dr. Addington did not chuse to engage, in so extraordinary an affair, without having his commission in writing. Sir James accordingly sent him a letter, the next morning, containing the above sentiments. Dr. Addington says, in his narrative, that sir James added verbally, that “ lord Bute was willing
 “ to engage, in such an administration,
 “ as secretary of state; and that no objection would be made to lord Camden,
 “ or more than one of lord Chatham’s
 “ friends.” This addition is peremptorily denied by sir James, who ascribes it, to Dr. Addington’s confounding the hypothetical conversation, that preceded the negociation, with the negociation itself.

THE answer, lord Chatham dictated, to sir James’s letter, which is very full and explicit, I shall beg leave to add.
 “ Lord Chatham heard, with particular
 “ satisfaction, the favourable sentiments,
 “ on this subject, of the noble lord, with
 “ whom

“whom you have talked, with regard
“to the impending ruin of the kingdom.
“He fears all hope is precluded: but
“adds, that zeal, duty and obedience may
“outlive hope; that, if any thing can
“prevent the consummation of public
“ruin, it can only be new counsels,
“and new counsellors without farther
“loss of time; a real change, from a sin-
“cere conviction of past errors, and not
“a mere palliation, which must prove
“fruitless.” In answer to Dr. Addington’s verbal communication, which was not made, till after writing the above note, lord Chatham affirmed, that “it was impossible for him, to serve the king and
“country, with either lord Bute, or lord
“North; and he desired Dr. Addington, if any one asked him about it, to
“bear witness, that he said so.”

The expression, “real change,” in the note, struck, it seems, both sir James and his patron, as pointing at that nobleman.

An

An answer was accordingly immediately returned, in which lord Bute disclaimed having seen the king, for many years; or knowing any thing of public affairs, but from common conversation, or the news papers. At the same time, sir James informed Dr. Addington, that his stay in town could be of no service.

LORD Bute had certainly been very fortunate, after the virulent persecution he had formerly undergone, not, at least, to have had his name traced, in any public transaction, for several years. Those, who were obstinate, in the belief of a secret influence, ascribed this, to the peculiar versatility and pliability of lord North's character. They supposed, the favourite had, at length, met with an instrument, that perfectly answered his purposes, and with whom he was completely satisfied. The present crisis however was a moment, to shake the firmest pilot from his seat. Whatever we may suppose

suppose the royal predilection, for the minister, to have been, it was surely natural, after so thorough a trial, to wish for a change ; or, at least, to reinforce the present cabinet, with some persons of more acknowledged abilities. Lord Chatham's very high language, at the commencement of the session, in support of the dependency of America, was certainly very acceptable, in the closet. And, if the evidence, already stated, be, in itself questionable, it receives however additional support, from some concurrent circumstances. Another friend of lord Bute had hinted to a near relation of lord Chatham, that he had heard his patron speak respectfully of that nobleman, and give his opinion, that his lordship's services must, of course, be called for, in the present crisis ; though the gentleman disclaimed giving his information, the form of a message. About the same time, lord Mountstuart, the eldest son of the favourite, threw out a
hint

hint of the same kind, in the house of lords. Many persons doubtless will not scruple to ascribe the peculiar asperity of the ostensible ministers, to lord Chatham, to a suspicion of this kind. The expressions, I have quoted, from sir James Wright's first communication, are certainly not unfavourable, to this hypothesis. Nor will the distinction, between the verbal, and the written message, probably be thought any objection. Lord Bute, supposing him to have been concerned in both, had surely learned such a caution, as this, from the repeated mortifications, he had undergone, upon this delicate subject.

It is scarcely necessary, to offer any apology, for the concern of our hero, in the above transaction. Nothing can be more evident, than that he did not court a negociation. It is also certain, that he was so far, from welcoming these advances, that he expressed, in the strongest

strongest terms, his dislike, to such a mode of application. Nothing can be fairly concluded, respecting him, but that lord Chatham was, by no means, averse, to listen to any proposals, that might have afforded him, a prospect of being serviceable, to his country: and that he would not have rejected such proposals, merely because they came, through the medium of lord Bute. That, in so alarming a crisis, the eyes, both of the court, and the nation, were turned, upon this venerable patriot, does surely reflect, upon him, the highest lustre. If we should suppose, which were indeed too much to be feared, that even the abilities, and the name of lord Chatham could not have rescued us; this only serves to elucidate the deplorable situation, to which we were reduced.—But it were too much, to have delivered this great and established name, once more, to the mercy of fortune. Heaven, in pity, snatched him, from so perilous a situation;

situation ; and placed that seal, upon his character, which, almost alone, in the instability of human affairs, can ascertain any reputation, illustrious and immortal.

ON the seventeenth of February, the minister introduced two bills, which he had, some time before, promised, of conciliation with America, into the house of commons. They conceded every thing, short of independence, even to the payment of their public debts. It was not however very likely, that such imperfect concession should tempt the colonies, to impeach their public faith, by violating the much more advantageous treaties, they had just made with France ; but with the conclusion of which the minister professed, not to have the smallest acquaintance. Scarcely however were the two bills passed into a law, when the execution, of the treaty of commerce, was publicly notified, to our court by the French ambassador.

HITHERTO,

HITHERTO, though the sentiments of the two great parties in opposition, upon our present situation, were known to be dissimilar, they had not yet come to any regular shock. The present incident gave occasion to the long expected event. The French notification was accompanied, to parliament, with a message, from the throne, replete with the most inflammatory language, and which fell little short of an immediate declaration of war. Upon the system of the Rockingham party, that of the immediate recognition of the American independency, the proceedings of the court of Versailles, certainly afforded no ground, for a rupture. Accordingly the duke of Richmond strongly condemned the stile of the message; and, from the consideration of our inequality, to the American contest, earnestly dissuaded parliament, from committing their country, in a new war. The earl of Shelburne, the intimate friend of lord Chatham, and who was considered, under

der that nobleman, as the head of his party, immediately rose up, to oppose these sentiments. He considered a war with France, as unavoidable; he insisted, that the idea of American dependency ought never, to be given up; and he asserted, that the moment, the contrary proposition should be admitted; the sun of Britain would be set for ever.

BUT the memorable scene, in which this question was principally agitated, was, on the seventh of the following April. On that day, the duke of Richmond closed his enquiry, into the state of the nation, with moving an address, to the throne, in which the facts, that had come out, in the course of the enquiry, were regularly stated: and the sovereign was humbly intreated, to dismiss his present ministers; and advised, to withdraw all his forces, by sea and land, from the revolted provinces, and to adopt amicable measures only, for recovering their

S friendship,

friendship, at least, if not their allegiance.

AN occasion, like this, called up all the enthusiasm of the most spirited character, that ever existed. Hitherto, though no outward imbecility could wholly detain this illustrious personage, from his chosen theatre of the senate; he had however chiefly restrained his presence, to those periods, when his health would most safely permit the attendance, and the exertion. But, upon so turning a question, as this, he could not forbear, giving his voice, and bearing his testimony. As he himself expressed it, upon the passing the stamp act; “ though confined to his bed; so great was the agitation of his mind, for the consequences, he would have solicited some kind hand, to have lain him down, upon that floor, to have borne his testimony against it.” No exit seemed, more congenial to his temper, or consonant to his life,

life; than to die, within the cincture of those walls; and to breathe his last articulation, in the inextinguishable haughtiness of Britain's better days, and the ardent sighs of expiring patriotism. It were a consummation, "devoutly to be wished." But it were a consummation, in the true spirit of romance. To be wished; not to be expected. To have his latest hour, stamped with the seal of immortal ardour: and this to be the inscription of his tomb, "Thus died the last of the Britons."

PREVIOUS to the Christmas recess of parliament, we have found him, attending that body, with more frequency, than he had been able to do, for many years. Had they adjourned, only to short intervals, he had promised, at all events, to continue that attendance. But, while that recess was drawn out into length, disease had again so far subdued him, as to render it apparently impossible. Upon

the moving the duke of Richmond's address, he went down, to the house, to die there.—He appeared extremely feeble, and spoke, with that difficulty of utterance, which is the characteristic of severe indisposition. But he rejoiced, that he was yet alive, to give his vote, against so impolitic, so inglorious a measure, as the acknowledgment of the independency of America. He declared, he had much rather be, in his grave, than to see the lustre of the British throne tarnished; the dignity of the empire disgraced; the glory of the nation sunk, to the degree, that it must be, by a cession, like this. He asked, what right had the two houses of parliament, to deprive the prince of Wales, and the other rising hopes of that illustrious house, of the inheritance of thirteen provinces of the empire? Sooner, than consent, to such a disherison, he would bring the young princes, in person, down, to that house, to plead their cause. He declared,
he

he was exceedingly ill: but, as long, as he could crawl, from his chamber; or had strength, to raise himself, upon his crutches, or lift his hand; he would give his vote, against this dereliction of empire; and singly, if no other lord were of his opinion, protest, against the measure.

HE next adverted to the conduct of the court of France. He said, it was necessary, absolutely to decide, either for peace, or war; and, when the former could not be preserved, with honour, the latter ought to be declared, without hesitation. He asked, where was the ancient spirit of the nation, that a foreign power was suffered, to bargain for that commerce, which was her natural right, and to enter into a treaty, with her own subjects, without her instantly resenting it? Was it possible, that we were the same nation, that, but sixteen years ago, were the envy and admiration of all the

S 3

world?

world? How were we altered? and, what had made the alteration? Whence sprang such pusillanimous, such timid, such dastardly counsels? What, were we to sit down, in an ignominious tameness? to say, "Take from us what you will, "but, in God's name, let us beat peace?" If France and Spain were for war, why not try an issue with them? Then, if we fell, we should fall decently, and like men.

With regard to our power, to carry on the present war, or commence a new one with France, he said, there were means, though he knew not what. If he were called upon, to give his advice, he feared, from the exceeding ill state of his health, that he had not abilities enough left, to secure success to his measures; but he would do his utmost, and would make some amends, by his sincerity.

To this animated harangue, the duke of Richmond rejoined. He said, that, if
the

the Americans could be persuaded, to give up the idea, he would be one of the first, to vote for retaining them dependent, upon the sovereignty of Britain. No man lamented the present crisis more, than he did. He begged the noble lord, to recollect, that it was not he, that disinherited the prince of Wales; but the ministry, who, by their misconduct, had brought us so low. He said, if the noble lord should undertake the conduct of a war, he would certainly support his measures, as far, as he was able. But he intreated him to remember, that, though spirit could do a great deal, it could do little alone. He did not doubt, that the name of the earl of Chatham (he begged his lordship's pardon, for mentioning it before him) would rouse the spirit of the nation. Yet that name, great and mighty, as it deservedly was, could not gain a victory, without an army, without a navy, and without money. If a great number of French ships met a few

of ours; did the noble earl think, that merely telling them, that lord Chatham had the conduct of affairs, would prevent our being beaten? If their ships passed our fleet, and the men, on board, effected an invasion; did the noble earl imagine, that merely telling those, who landed, that lord Chatham was the minister, and that he had roused the spirit of the nation, would induce them, to disembark, and desert their purposed intrenchment? If his lordship had told him, how the war was to be carried on, and whence the supplies were to be obtained; he would readily have given up his own opinion, and adopted the noble lord's. But, till those essential points were established, he must beg leave to retain his present sentiments.

As the duke drew near the end of his reply, lord Chatham seemed much agitated. He immediately attempted to rise. But his feelings proved too strong, for
his

his debilitated constitution. He suddenly pressed his hand, upon his stomach, and fell down, in a convulsive fit. The house was instantly thrown, into the greatest alarm. The business of the day was at an end. The strangers, below the bar, who were uncommonly numerous, were ordered to withdraw. The house adjourned. His lordship was presently, in some degree, restored; but he never perfectly recovered, and this scene proved the prelude, to his death. That melancholy event took place, on the eleventh of May 1778.

MANY circumstances concur, to render the scene, I have described, singularly interesting. The crisis, with respect to public affairs; and the question, which was to be, that day, decided, were of the first magnitude. It was a question, that, taken in all its parts, could never recur again. They were to determine on peace, or war. They had already
been

been worsted, upon a narrower scene ; and they were to determine, whether they would engage, exhausted, as they were, upon a scene, widened, to an extent, that the mind of longest reach, could set no bounds to it. They were about, to commit the very existence of their country, for an object, which every unbiafed mind might then have pronounced, absolutely unattainable. They were about to commit it, for an object, of which, at least, it was very doubtful, whether it were legitimate.—But, why should I say, doubtful ? The impartiality of history consists, in manifesting no respect of persons, or of party. It is the farthest, in the world, from consisting, in mincing truth, or trifling with the eternal, immutable laws of rectitude.—The object then was perfectly and evidently illegitimate. Every country has an inherent, unalienable right to assert its independency.—They were to chuse then, between the imaginary dignity, which

which consists, in persevering to do wrong: and that true greatness, whose first object is justice; that “long-sighted” and strong-nerved” policy, that dares to counteract all the private feelings of humanity, in the pursuit of rectitude.

BUT this is not all, that gives an interesting colour to the scene. We naturally hang, upon the last accents of an illustrious personage. A thousand additional circumstances attract us, in the present case: the age, the infirmities, the unabated vigour, and immortal patriotism of the hero. There is much apparent magnanimity, in his sentiments; and we feel, with deep regret, that he lived a day too long. The haughty accents of the man, that broke the power of France, could not mould themselves, to the present humiliation of Britain. The debate too constitutes a very singular situation. The earl of Chatham, till this day, had never been conquered.

And

And we are conscious, to the motions of pity, when we see stern, unmixed virtue, urging her victory, over the breathless hero ; unknowing, that the hand of fate prepared, at that moment, to unstring his nerves, and lay his honour in the dust.

I CONFESS, I am not skilled, to extract praise, from the assertion of a wrong, however varnished. But, if we cannot commend, it is not difficult, to apologise, for the conduct of our hero. It was certainly the noble, though, in the present instance, misguided flame of patriotism, that animated him. In an extensive view, he undoubtedly cherished the liberties of mankind. If he were the last to grant independency ; let it be remembered, that he was the first public man, in this country, to assert, to the American, the right of giving his own money. He is therefore, at least intitled, to the praise of consistency, in what appeared originally right. Something may perhaps be
allowed,

allowed, to the enthusiasm of a conqueror. And something certainly may be given, to the slow reception of new opinions, that is necessarily incident, to an aged bosom. The error is certainly such, that it is to pay a very high compliment, to any character, to say, that it is, among its most conspicuous.

THE day, on which lord Chatham expired, the house of commons voted unanimously, that he should be interred, and a monument erected, to his memory, at the public expence. A few days after, they annexed, for ever, an annuity of L 4000 to his peerage; and added, an immediate grant of L 20,000 for the payment of his debts. Such was the gratitude, even of a degenerate age, to one of the first political characters, that ever existed.

SUCH was the life of lord Chatham. Never perhaps was any life so multifarious;

ous; never did any comprise such a number of interesting situations. It is difficult, to bring the scattered features of such a character, into one point of view: and accordingly I have endeavoured, to illustrate them separately, as they rise; and have not feared, as digressive, or impertinent, any thing, of however extensive a range, that might throw new light, upon my subject. Something however, in the way of summary, will probably be expected; and however rude and undigested, it may not perhaps be unproductive, either of use, or entertainment.

ONE of the first things, that strikes us, in the recollection of this story, is the superior figure our hero makes, among his contemporaries. Like the first king of the Jews, he walks, elevated by the head, above his compatriots; who seem, as they were born his subjects. Men of genius and attraction, a Carteret, a Townshend, and, I had almost said, a Mansfield,

Mansfield, however pleasing, in a limited view ; appear evidently, in this comparison, to shrink, into narrower dimensions, and walk a humbler circle. All, that deserves to arrest the attention, in taking a general survey of the age, in which he lived, is comprised, in the history of Chatham.

No character ever bore the more undisputed stamp of originality. Unresembled and himself, he was not born to accommodate, to the genius of his age. While all, around him, were depressed, by the uniformity of fashion, or the contagion of venality, he stood aloof. He consulted no judgment, but his own ; and he acted, from the untainted dictates of a comprehensive soul. He loved fame too much ; but it was the weakness of a noble mind. He loved power too much ; but it was power of a generous strain. And he had passions, that had nothing selfish, in their texture. No
spirit

spirit ever burned, with a purer flame of patriotifm.

THE native royalty of his mind is eminently conspicuous. He felt himfelf born to command; and the free fons of Britain implicitly obeyed him. In him was realized the fable of Orpheus; and his genius, his fpirit, his eloquence led millions, in his train, fubdued the rugged favage, and difarmed the fangs of malignity and envy. Nothing is, in its nature, fo inconfiftant, as the breath of popular applaufe. And yet that breath was eminently his, during the greater part of his life. Want of fuccefs could not divert it; inconfiftency of conduct could not change its tenour.

THE aftonifhing extent of his views, and, if I may be allowed the expreffion, the myfterious comprehension of his plans, did not, in one refpect, fet him above little things. Nothing, that was neceffary,

fary, to the execution of his designs, was beneath him. And, in a far humbler walk, like omnipotence, the complication and minuteness of the lesser motions, that were essential to his grand machine, could not distract him.—In one respect, he was infinitely estranged, to little things. Swallowed up, in the business of his country, he did not think of the derangement of his private affairs. Even the management of the pecuniary affairs, and the finances of the nation, he was obliged to leave, to other hands. In the commencement of his political career, he learned the art of independence, by the very laudable means, of confining his disbursements, within the limits of his income. At the same time, the native bent of his mind disqualified him, for arithmetical calculation, and laborious frugality. Indisposed therefore, as he was, to all the modes of dissipated expence, his affairs, even when his circumstances were much improved, were always deranged.

T

BUT

BUT the features, that seem most eminently to have characterised him, were spirit and intrepidity. I believe, there never existed a person, that came within many shades of our hero, in these beautiful attributes. They are conspicuous, in every action, and every turn of his life. A few specimens may however probably be selected without disadvantage.—The answer to Horace Walpole, inserted in the first chapter of this work, is not more remarkable, for the genius, that pervades it, and the thousand literary beauties, it exhibits; than, for the enchanting display, it affords, of undaunted, manly firmness. Without being outraged, into the smallest approach, to those littlenesses and absurdities; that render the passionate man, an auxiliary, in the revenge against himself: he asserts himself, with dignity; and retorts upon his antagonist, with that graceful spirit, shall I call it? or, that inextinguishable fire; that, to a generous mind,

is

is one of the most attractive objects, in the world.

IN a debate, in the house of lords, that took place, about his grand climacteric: though worn down, with age, with exertion, and, more than all, with the unremitted attacks of an excruciating distemper; having occasion to observe, upon the declining liberties of his country, and the growing spirit of the colonies, he asserted, with a boyish vigour, that no other man could have exhibited; that, were it not, for invincible obstacles, he would infallibly retire from Britain, and spend the remainder of his days, in that glorious asylum of liberty, of manliness, and of virtue.

BUT the last scene of his life, is of all others, the most unparalleled. In whatever other views, we may consider; and, in whatever views, condemn it: as an example of never-ebbing spirit, we can-

not but admire. His infirmities had now rendered his every limb, the rebel of his will. The couch of lassitude seemed all, that remained to him. The situation of his country too, was arduous, hopeless, and untried. The inexhaustible genius of a Chatham, was forced to confess, that he knew not, how we were to be extricated. Yet, in these circumstances, with his lifeless, nerveless hand, he was willing to have grasped the helm. It was improbable ; it was impossible, he should have succeeded. But these impotent efforts of immortal man ; these instances, in which the soul bursts the bands of earth, and stands alone, in confessed eternity ; are the most beautiful, the most pathetic, the most sublime exhibitions, of which the mind of man is adequate to conceive.

THE vices, if we should be disposed, to qualify them, with so harsh a name ; of great minds, are ever nearly allied, to
their

their virtues.—The manners of lord Chatham, were indeed easy and bland. His conversation was spirited and gay; and he readily adapted himself, to the complexion of those, with whom he associated. That artificial reserve, which is the never-failing refuge of self-diffidence and cowardice, was not made for him. He was unconstrained, as artless infancy; and generous, as the noon-day sun. Yet had he something impenetrable, that hung about him. A mind, lofty, as heaven, and expansive, as the element, was not a theatre, for every emmet to traverse. His conceptions were necessarily aggregated. And ambition, that reigning passion of his soul, that meets us, at every turn, had introduced a fold or two, into his heart, that nature never made.

By an irresistible energy of soul, he was haughty and imperious. He was incapable of associating counsels; and he was not formed for the sweetest bands of

society. He was a pleasing companion, but an unpliant friend. In his connections of the latter kind, I am afraid, we shall find little, beside the name. He was like those instruments of music, whose grand and bolder tones, will not readily accord, with the lighter touches of a less manly instrument. His soul was not made, to blend, and to bow. The dismissal of Mr. Legge formed no epocha in his mind. His dispute with earl Temple, however unexceptionable, as to the substance; was, in its manner, unaccommodating and unamiable. Even his treatment of his humbler friend, Mr. Wilkes, was surely unjustifiable. That gentleman has, in the most public manner, asserted, that lord Chatham had seen, and applauded the essay on woman, some years, before it was brought forward, as an instrument of his ruin.

THE ambition of my hero, however generous in its strain, was the source of repeated

repeated errors, in his conduct. To the resignation of lord Carteret, and again, from the commencement of the year 1770, his proceedings were bold and uniform. In the intermediate period, they were marked, with a versatility, incident only, in general, to the most flexible minds. We may occasionally trace in them, the indecision of a candidate, and the suppleness of a courtier. In a word, he aimed at the impossible task, of flattering, at once, the prejudices of a monarch, and pursuing unremittedly the interests of the people.

A FEATURE too, sufficiently prominent in his character, was vanity, shall I call it? or pride, and conscious superiority. He dealt surely somewhat too freely in invective. He did not pretend to an ignorance of his talents; or to manage the display of his important services. Himself was too often, the hero of his tale; and the successes of the last war, the burden

of his song. Cicero never talked more, of the ides of November. But, if he were as boastful, as Cicero, he had certainly much more, as a citizen, to boast of. Timidity was the first feature of the Roman; and, even when he terrified Catiline into flight, he trembled. Upon all other occasions, his conduct was spiritless and unserviceable. On the contrary, lord Chatham was, at all times, intrepid. His services were more important, more continued; and owed infinitely less, to fortune. And, exclusive of the memorable era of his administration, he may be considered, upon the whole, as the unaccommodating patriot of half a century.

PATRIOTISM itself however was the source of some of his imperfections. He loved his country too well: or, if that may sound absurd, the benevolence, at least, that embraces the species, had not sufficient scope in his mind. He once stiled himself, “a lover of honourable
“ war;”

“war;” and, in so doing, he let us, into one trait of his character. The friend of human kind, will be an enemy to all war. He indulged too much, to a puerile antipathy, to the house of Bourbon. And it was surely the want of expansive affections, that led him, to so unqualified a condemnation of American independency.

BUT the eloquence of lord Chatham was one of his most striking characteristics. *He far outstripped his competitors, and stood alone, the rival of antiquity.* When he took his place in parliament, it has been observed, by a celebrated writer, that there were half a dozen speakers, in both houses, who, in the judgment of the public, had reached, nearly the same pitch of eloquence. Voltaire represents them, as rivalling, or surpassing the greatest orators of Greece and Rome. But the equality of their fame has justly been considered, as an unanswerable argument,

ment, against this supposition. In an art, which is either necessarily, or casually, in a state of mediocrity, twenty workmen will perform equally well; but, where true eminence has been reached, the comparative merit of the artists will be no longer doubtful. And indeed, how cold and jejune, in a poetical view, do the harangues of a Wyndham, or a Pulteney appear? But neither of these objections can be urged against lord Chatham. He has tropes and fallies, that may justly vie, with the noblest flights of antiquity. And he certainly leaves his coadjutors, as far behind him, as ever did a Cicero, or a Demosthenes.

His eloquence was of every kind. No man excelled him, in close argument, and methodical deduction. But this was not the stile, into which he naturally fell. His oratory was unlaboured and spontaneous. He rushed, at once, upon his subject; and usually illustrated it, rather

rather by glowing language, and original conception, than by cool reasoning. His person was tall and dignified. His face was the face of an eagle. His piercing eye withered the nerves, and looked through the souls of his opponents. His countenance was stern, and the voice of thunder sat upon his lips. Anon however, he could descend to the easy and the playful. His voice seemed scarcely more adapted, to energy, and to terror; than it did, to the melodious, the insinuating, and the sportive. If however, in the enthusiasm of admiration, we can find room, for the frigidity of criticism; his action seemed the most open to objection. It was forcible, uniform, and ungraceful. In a word, the most celebrated orators of antiquity, were, in a great measure, the children of labour and cultivation. Lord Chatham was always natural and himself. And perhaps action, in order to be various and beautiful, is, of all the accomplishments

ments of an orator, that, which most requires the support of art.

To the misfortune of the republic of letters, and of posterity, lord Chatham never fought the press. How easy had it then been, to have refuted those elegant critics, who have thought proper, to tell us, that his language was incorrect, and his orations immethodical and superficial? How indisputably had he then taken his place, in the roll of immortality, with a Demosthenes, and a Cicero? But he voluntarily submitted, in a great measure, to that evanescent fame, as a speaker; which was the inevitable misfortune, of his excellent contemporary, Mr. Garrick, as an actor. Posterity will hardly be persuaded, that, in the meagreness of modern times, a Demosthenes should have existed, without his Æschines; and a Cicero, without an Hortensius and a Cæsar. Posterity will hardly be persuaded, that one man
could

could have concentrated the arduous characters of the greatest statesman, and the most accomplished rhetorician, that ever lived. In a word, posterity will, with difficulty, believe the felicity of Britain: that lord Chatham was, among the orators, what Shakespear is, among the poets of every age. "The child of fancy, " he warbled the irregular notes, that " nature gave," with so sweet a grace; as turned the cheek of envy pale, and and drove refinement, and trammelled science, into coward flight. Honeyed music dropped unbidden from his lips. Had he, like his great predecessor, addressed his effusions, to the troubled waves; the troubled waves had suspended themselves to listen. His lips were cloathed, with inspiration and prophecy. Sublimity, upon his tongue, sat, so enveloped in beauty, that it seemed, unconscious of itself. It fell upon us unexpected, it took us by surprise, and, like the fearful whirlpool, it drew every understanding, and every heart, into it's vortex.

LORD

LORD Chesterfield has told us, that this nobleman possessed “a most happy turn for poetry.” For the judgement of lord Chesterfield however, the author of this work confesses, that he does not feel an implicit veneration. Only one of lord Chatham’s poetical performances ever fell into my hands; a copy of verses to Mr. Garrick; in which the peculiarities of our hero’s mind, are very faintly shadowed indeed. The noble author adds, that “he seldom indulged, and seldom avowed it.” It should seem then, that he himself set no great value upon it. Perhaps a proper confidence of one’s-self, is essential to all extraordinary merit. Why should we ambitiously ascribe to one mind, every species of human excellence?

T H E E N D.

XX IX 89



The History of the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham

London 1783

Biogr. 897 x

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10065846-8